Officer Misako: Case of the Amoresi

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Summary: She was scarred, but a fierce determination drove her onwards towards the mystery of the underground mafia of Soluna City, 'the Howl's Angels' Nostra Cost. First MechQuest fanfic... R&R. A mind-blowing plot twist - The shocking finale is coming...

Chapter 1: Broken glass

It was a misty twilight in the sordid site of Soluna City as the local pizzeria slowed to a halt.

A zesty rotund man with a large appetite was sweeping the floor with a broom in his mechanical hand. He was in an undeniably foul mood tonight – that rival *The Rusty Rat* was serving up customers quicker than John could order his employees around.

That meant business was booming, which gave him a bad feeling about *competition* around these new areas. And he was also worried about those latest crime sprees.

Just then a solitary spot of dirt caught his infrared bionic eye, John zoomed the lenses closer for a better look at the dust.

Yup, counters needed cleaning, the head employee noted as he saw the stray particles of grimy atoms becoming magnified in his sight. "You, delivery girl, you missed a spot here!" John ordered as his thunderous voice filled the empty Pizzeria.

The delivery girl in question was sweating as she mopped her forehead with her spare hand. Green locks of cropped hair obscured her vision as Parma inspected the remaining counters.

"Parma," Misako managed to whisper, "you *do* realize that crime sprees are increasing around Soluna. I was just thinking… I should get a pay-rise by now." Parma's eyebrows twitched in morbid exasperation, he leant closer to the sporty teenage girl.

"And what *does that* has to do with your part time job?" John stated in a silky and yet dangerous voice, the tempo of his voice was gradually rising.

The windows rattled in response as the pizzeria's clock chimed twice.

"Nothing, nothing." Misako retaliated, "I just thought you didn't know."

"Didn't know? You have been working here for at least all three weeks –

You want a raise? Misako, you don't know what you're asking for!"

His voice was low and menacing as Misako was oblivious to him.

"My golden mecha called Astern has been crushed several times by your rival; the ejector-seat no longer works anymore... I have been way behind in Energy weapon class; I have to pay Miss Tek for all repairs –"

"Plus I have to catch up with my friends Devi Whirl and Vixen at the same time. Therefore I need a raise… Please, Parma John." The eyes were calm.

There was a loud sound as Parma strode up to the young girl; his shadow was cast very long as he was walking.

The girl knew this was coming.

"I will not stand for this sort of talk from my other employees!" John announced as the rest of the other workers stopped to peer at the spectacle. Misako hung her head, but then her fist tightened in emotion.

Speech at that moment never came, instead the words were interrupted.

There was a sudden crash as the glassy door opened, it revealed a burly white-haired man with a beer-gut and leather clothes.

The man was tough and he had a tattoo emblazoned on his thick neck. He appeared fearsome and ironically, Parma John didn't seem to be afraid of gangsters.

"Yo, guys." The male rapped as Parma John stood at his full height.

The few customers that were seated were looking very incredulous.

They were thinking, *this can't be happening in Mecharoni.*

Ironically, it was.

"What do you want from us?" John demanded ferociously to the man as Misako hid behind the neon bright pizza-oven.

The oven was hot and it was still running on medium, she winced as she felt the sizzling heat.

"Word is that you're *our* target," said the sniper snidely as he revealed a state-of-the-art *340 Techno-Blaster* eagerly.

"This is a major stick-up! Your money or your life, Parma John." the rustic gangster commanded, toying with his new weapon as if it was a trophy. The weapon caught the shimming light of the reflected oven and glinted wickedly.

The gangster grasped the turbo-charged gun precariously in his hands and cocked it as the deadly instrument searched for its target.

"You threaten me and I'll spray you with this tomato sauce." John replied indignantly, holding up his new pepperoni-shooter.

The customers meanwhile were disorientated as Misako watched behind the scenes.

"What's going on with this weird man?" whined some teenage customers, not realising the deadly seriousness of their current situations.

The sniper thwacked them both on the head and they groaned.

"We want a full refund from Parma John!" yelled the other customers.

The man laughed and his yellowing teeth were pale and unhealthy.

"Try me, Parma…!" the robber challenged John as he gave a single nod.

It was a signal for attack; at once three other men came *crashing* through the windows wielding energy weapons.

The energy from the sabres illuminated the lady behind the counter.

The woman's expression was one of dismay as she shielded herself from the dazzling light that the sabre

had cast. Her single cyborg arm stood out.

"Heh," grinned the main gangster widely, "It looks we have hostages."

Dark-chocolate spruced hair was easily seen amongst the contrasting metal areas.

One of the ginger-haired men grabbed Maza Rella, the pizzeria's cashier as he awaited further instructions and pressed a stunner against her pale whitish neck.

The second man literally dragged Maza to her feet, straining heavily at the weight of the half-cyborg lady.

"Don't ya move," the sweaty hooded gangster barked at poor Maza, "otherwise ya a target for Ricky."

A loud *schiiiing* penetrated the room as the second person drew the energy-light sai from his spare hand.

The person seemed more youthful and masculine than the other gangsters.

His ginger-coloured hair was the highlight as his muscles ripped from his uniform, showing patches of light tan skin.

He would have been handsome, except for the ever penetrating scowl.

"All of you customers don't move a muscle," he ordered as Maza paled.

If any of the people in the Mecharoni had so much as twitched, the teenager would take care of those offenders, there was complete silence. Parma John was still sizing up the main gangster, who still muttered Soluna curses.

The first thing Misako did was make sure that she was still hidden; being secretive wasn't really on her mind right now, what with tension building.

Was that guy bluffing? He might have been.

The oven still poured out intense waves of heat as Misako started perspiring.

She was going to completely blow her cover - but she wouldn't allow this sort of dilemma to change whatever was happening.

It had been over five minutes and still nobody had moved so much as a single finger...

The boy's gaze shifted constantly, locking his eyes on each of the 'witnesses'.

He was daring them to move, challenging everyone…

Maza started to try and remove the boy's tenuous hold on her neck with her robotic arm, but the boy grappled with the victim's response.

"Firking Kelf!" swore the criminal in undefined Soluna language as Maza fell to her feet, she grabbed his arm.

He never knew *this* lady had such a strong grip, although it was possibly because of her cyborg arm which now pinned against him.

Pity, if only she was part of my gang… Then Soluna wouldn't be the same.

He smiled in mock adoration at Maza as she continued pressing harder,

"You sure got a great grip for such a Bonaire lassie." he complemented.

Maza momentarily relaxed her grip, the boy had complemented *her? Of all people?*

Without warning the teenager lost his hold on the sai and it dropped limply from his fingers.

The solitary ringing sound rang across the Pizzeria.

At once a firm and steady hand from near the oven grabbed the weapon and the boy looked wildly upon Misako, who emerged wary. His pupils became diluted in recognition as the delivery girl clumsily picked up *his weapon.*

"NO!"

"Huh?" gasped Bloghurl, a slimy green grub-alien, "She's the waitress?"

The green-haired University student spun across the room, finally landing in a finishing clumsy pose.

She held the small weapon as it hummed in her hand insistently.

"Hands off criminals," Misako always wanted to say that.

There was a ferocious roar as the remaining man of the gang went rabid.

The final man who had wild hair had started smashing all the chairs and tables.

Each time there was an awful crunching sound as he ground them into the floor. Thankfully, candles were still unlit.

More glass shattered onto the floor as the customers tried to avoid them with chaos and mayhem reigning.

"*MIIINE!"* screamed a very familiar voice…

There was a very long prolonged yell as the boy was suddenly released from the binds of Maza's slackened grip and then reached longingly for his stolen light sai…

Misako avoided his stray punch as the criminal grimaced in strained frustration.

His form crouched intensely before he leapt over the female, flipping gravity-defying somersaults as he aimed for her.

Possessively he turned upon the other people watching this aerobatic performances and struck them as if he didn't want people to watch this event. Instantly the male customers were floored as the criminal now focused on *her*.

"It's *MINE, geddit?* Lousy college *Oeyken!"* The teen snarled venomously at Misako before his entire form started glowing dark crimson. There was clearly a mana-aura building around his body. Clearly very dangerous, she must flee with caution.

Misako stepped back and the immoral youth snatched up a piece of jagged glass, it had shone with some sort of glee…

"Want a piece of *this*, pathetic *Oeyken*?" The youth asked fiercely as he jabbed without any conscience.

The girl screamed sharply as she felt its touch.

It seemed to happen in slow motion, first Misako saw the robber aim for her face. She felt agonising pain in the area near her right eye and then the razor-sharp glass grazed the scar, further rubbing his insult into the wound…

The boy slashed downwards, his movement was a strong powerful stroke.

Misako reacted by trying to push the perpetrator backwards. *"Don't-!"*

Blood began streaming, at first she didn't recognise the reddish liquid, but then she realised it was *hers.* It dripped onto the floor as Misako looked terrified of the boy. The customers gasped at the face as the main gangster smirked, forgetting his purpose for a moment as he robbed John's main cashier.

"*Oh Lariat!* Look what that fiend did to that poor waitress!"

"Call *SPD* to arrest them!" An unknown voice declared.

"*What?!* Delivery girl needs urgent medical help!"

A brown-coated detective pushed through the customers, reaching Misako. The female was startled; it was someone she had known forever from the Gears shuttle. His presence was familar.

"Detective Devi-Whirl!" she managed to say, recognising his wild hair.

"Misako?! What did that boy *do* to your eye?" he gasped in revulsion, "Oh Lariat."

"Tell me quickly, who did it?" Devi continued, looking upon the crowd.

"It was that kidnapper," Misako faltered out, Maza nodded insecurely.

"*Shimei!*" swore Devi in profound regret as Misako's right eye vision blurred then gave out momentarily.

Glossary of made up Soluna language: (quite fun)

Dardeni - To deny something/someone.
Firking/Firkin: An expression of horror.
Kelf - Equivalent to the word 'death'.
Shimei - Equivalent to swearing, something really shocking.
SPD - Soluna city Police Department
Oeyken - Soluna for girl or 'maid'

More words coming soon, any suggestions for them?

Chapter 2: Reaction

Officer Misako

"Owww, my eye hurts so much!" complained Misako later as she looked at her new reflection.

Devi gave her a sympathetic smile as Nurse Helia inspected the scarring.

"Thank your Lorithian gods that your injury didn't get any worse," stated Nurse Helia sarcastically, her coldness was apparently indicated by her clearly annoyed voice. "Your new injury'll heal over time and vision in frontal cornea returns eventually."

As the beautiful nurse shimmied with otherworldly grace, Devi tracked her movements with oblivious lusty eyes.

Helia was clearly an expert physician, but Devi noted that something about the nurse's behaviour unnerved the sleuth –

It was the way the nurse leant on the table now, revealing her vibrant red undergarment as she tided up the surgical instruments.

Enchanted, Devi followed her every movement. Helia's voice was a hypnotic stupor.

"Hey, do you treat other people?!" Devi insisted; nurse Helia's expression was icy.

"No, I already told you twice. Soluna hospital is closed for new reservations."

Devi's stern expression became one of interest.

He started walking towards the vacant-expressioned Helia, who stood in the middle of the pink claustrophobic wards.

"Now you can reserve some pity for this lovesick detective?" he started pleading.

Helia's hands tightened around something hidden underneath her clean-cut uniform and Devi was shocked.

"Do you want me to call my mecha, the Big H?" Nurse Helia threatened quietly.

Her elegant voice both harsh and lilted fell on Devi's deaf ears…

"I can assure you that after it takes care of *you*, you have free one-way trips to *my* infirmary wards."

At once the spell was broken and Devi let go of the failed topic.

"Forget it!" Devi roared, "With a frosty personality, Helia should go to *KELF!"*

Meanwhile, Misako was observing her scar in renewed curiosity.

Rage built up when she remembered that the person who caused this was still out there, committing illicit acts of violence.

Maza was just about to catch him but he ran off laughing idiotically.

"It can't be," She realised now that her scar was jagged slashes vertical from her eye.

It was stinging, raw and sore. It hurt so badly, it was as if she couldn't recognise herself.

Misako saw the clear reflection, a reminder of the senseless event which happened.

Hot painful tears fell down her tanned face. *Why did that firkin boy do this?*

The girl started crying to herself, she was disfigured now and she felt alone.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

"Good afternoon, Master Wasabi." Soluna University students chorused as a tall man with white lanky hair entered the room.

The Master raised a furry eyebrow.

What did they call him, was this a sign of disrespect from the new Mecha recruits?

"What did you call me?" asked Master Tsuba, he cocked his wizened head comically as his white beard was tufted in a dark grey band. A yellow masked Moglin giggled nearby in the Energy-sword dojo.

The female students blushed in acts of laughter.

Behind them, the students made fun of the wise Master by covering up their smiles.

"Such disrespect nowadays from students, I'm doing a *Dardeni* on any of you who have said my name incorrectly."

They looked confused.

"This is a Soluna martial arts term, it means I'll simply ignore all the fine words you all called me." Tsuba tutted inconsiderately as Vixen raised her hand and started waving it; he focused on the reddish aspect of her hair.

At once the laughter ceased, Vixen looked around in confinement as Tsuba smiled mystically.

Vixen's expression was frozen in awe. "Wow, what's happening...?!"

The rest of the students were unaware of their presence and their eyes slid away from both teacher and learner…

"What's going on? Firking dojo," said an outfoxed Vixen, who was concerned for the other people.

She wasn't in the mood for mind games; she hated the logic with a passion.

"See, they're all ignoring us." Master Tsuba told Vixen gently, raising her head level with his.

"If you use the Force, anything in the universe become in tune with the mana-magic every soul emanates."

"Fine, let me continue talking to gnarly Lars over there," Vixen said, clearly bored with this event...

"This sounds rather boring, monologues coming from *Star Wars…!"*

"I see you're from *Terra,"* commented Master Tsuba wistfully.

"People from the planet *Terra* became insensitive to the Force over time and aren't usually aware of this influence."

"Earth," corrected Vixen rather snappily, "Is that what the word means in Soluna?"

"I assume your friends are from different parts of the galaxy then?" Vixen nodded.
Tsuba tilted his head in the direction of a brash student, "Which planet is he from?"

"Dane? Oh, he's the planet Excelsior; Devi Whirl originates from planet Mars…"

"Misako - hem, I'm not sure about *her* planet." Vixen confessed.

"Is that why Mako looks very sullen over there in the corner?" Tsuba asked.

Vixen was startled, she shook her head.

"No, my friend recently had a terrible experience in amateur job." the girl explained.

"Which explains the red injuries and everything…" the foxy lady trailed off.

"We will talk again much later Vixen," advised Tsuba sagely, "Nice chat."

The Master closed his eyes and immediately the Force lifted from the Dojo.

Everyone looked around confused as Tsuba laughed heartily.

"Enjoying the lesson?"

"What was that all about?" exclaimed Dane, "That was such the coolest thing!"

"What you've all experienced just now was the Force."

"This mana-magic penetrates each individual differently and it can only be selected by the most gifted of all."

There were murmurs of wonder as Devi gave derisive snorts.

"Forces, scorches, we can do without this rubbish. I don't need the Force to succeed in this class."

"Yes, this is why I've assigned new aliases for my *stulos."* Tsuba smiled.

"As the first to sense the Force, Vixen, *stulos* shall call you Vincor, which is sinuous for the word *perceptive."*

Vixen giggled as she realised the full meaning of the name. Tsuba strode over to Misako, all alone in her corner.

"For your sheer determination, Misako, I shall address you as Mako, which is Soluna for *Docile."*

Devi's eyes became wide; he anticipated his ceremonial name as Tsuba now turned to him.

Hopefully his name would be awesome and wow the other cool *stulos.*

"Ah Devi," Tsuba noted, "stubborn one. Soluna name is Deeta, meaning *devious*."

Devi's excited face fell. "WHAT?!" he yelled as Tsuba winked at him in coolness.

"Good luck in future classes, Deeta... It's a female name, but perfectly suited you."

Everybody laughed except a select few who groaned, hoping theirs weren't worse.

"I *love* this class," Devi muttered ironically, looking at the reader of this story.

Chapter 4: The Force

"I *love* this class," Devi muttered.

"Deeta?! Oh crud, I *hate* that name!" yelled Devi as he lounged in dojo a couple of weeks later, he was attempting to swipe the *Training-Ball* with beginner weapons

The metallic ball swerved to avoid his every move, much to our male's frustration.
"Well, maybe Tsuba and you happen to be on the same wavelength." Mako offered as a theory as the *stulos* dropped the translator she was holding. *"Wace!"*

"As if, are you insane? No way has that fossil seen eye to eye with me!" Devi glared.

Suddenly the ball thwacked offensive Martian several times on the head as a form of reprimand.

"Stupid ball! Ball thinks it's so great!" Mako winced as the determined Devi ran at the ball, charging like a maniac who drank much espressos at once.

"Deeta, no. You shouldn't do that!" warned Misako as her friend ignored advice.

"WAAAARGH!" A war cry echoed in the dojo as the not-so-valiant detective missed his target and as a result landed on the Training-board... "What the-? *Shimeiiii!!!"* The stiff stick creaked and bore his weight before catapulting him into the ceiling.
This left our Martin in an amusing situation, where his upper body remained in concrete while lower half stuck out like an eyesore. "Ouch, that smarts."

Mako shook her head in disappointment, *was her friend going to pass the exam-?*

"Devi! Are you okay up there?" she asked coolly, a muffled reply simpered out.

Just then Tsuba passed by, "Hello Mako," he said coyly before staring up at ceiling.
"You alright up there, stulos Deeta? Oh no, not again." The old teacher sighed…

Tsuba called Twang the Moglin to his side as the furry creature laughed at Devi's appearance.

"Think you can get Deeta *out* of there?" he requested Twang.

Twang sniffled, "Fishes and iceswream, which means definitely yes."

Moglin activated his Force and swiftly detective Devi plopped out the ceiling.

Devi had a dazed expression slathered on his typically serious face. "I love fishes."

"Deeta, if you ever hope at passing, may I suggest less hostile moves?" Tsuba shouted sternly as Deeta looked very guilty.
"At this rate, the entire dojo will break down."

"I'm sorry, old fossil." Devi gave a sincere smile, "I *abhor* this class anyway."

At this Tsuba looked very offended and turned his attention to young Mako.

"I warned Deeta, but he didn't listen." Misako diverged, as the Master nodded.

"Have you tried wielding an energy blade before?" Tsuba asked the teenager.

Mako shifted her feet in clear concern, "What does that involve?" she remembered.
"Energy blades are dangerous in wrong hands; therefore you must sense Force first and it guides your seven senses."

"Only then will the label appear." Tsuba said philosophically.
"Seven senses?" whispered a startled Misako, "I thought there were five."

In reply Tsuba held up what appeared to be a piece of cloth, a blindfold.

"No, you must sharpen your four senses and judge for yourself." He called a male stulos, who happened to be strong.

"This is your opponent, Mithlos Straus. Use your four senses and Force at him."

Misako began to sweat in pure fear, memorising events happened at Mecharoni.

"But *Matos*, my scar…" she stammered.
There was an interruption as Tsuba shushed her and handed her energy sword.
"Concentrate on your goal." He told the *stulos.*

At once, she felt the blindfold upon her vision, obscuring her depth perception.

Now Misako could see nothing, only the dark cloth bounded. "Go, Mako."

The material composed of soft velvet soothed her panic. *What was there?*

Suddenly, Mako felt a sensation of determined anger. She could hear her opponent grunting in exertion and she was knocked off her feet. The girl got up again, gripping her sword in apprehension. Mako felt like failing, but she didn't want to admit it. Mako defended herself against randomised wild strikes, hearing the vibrations of energy particles sizzling. Mithlos tightened his moves, this time it was focused and rapid.

"Misako-! Go, you can do it!" Then there was a direct hit from the rear and Mako flipped onto her back, groaning in pain.
"She's down for the count." Mithlos taunted. Senses tingling, Mako stood up again shakily, ready for a second turn.
This time, she could feel more movements, they were from different people.
There was one aura belonging to Devi and the other one was Tsuba...

Owww! Another strike from Mithlos.

Mako slammed her sword into Mithlos thick side and he bellowed in shock. He was down, but quickly got up again.

Mithlos sure had great stamina for a heavyweight…

The energy blade rained down like water rapids and the girl cried out in surprise.

He was just too fast for her, no matter how many defences she put up. *Impossible.* This time Mako aimed for his chest, but rival pushed the girl backwards roughly and she landed on her front. She was beginning to think this was hopeless.

Anger consumed Mako; it wasn't fair of Tsuba to set up a challenge so difficult.

Awareness took place of her rage, not only could she feel the movements...

Misako could hear the singing of the individual blades, her one sounded like a humming top and Mithlos blade was a thudding sound, like an iron or metal sword. She spun and flipped as Mithlos started missing his target and then…

A final blow.

"Ha, it looks like I'm the winner." Mithlos bragged as Misako removed her cloth from around her face. She was lying on her side whereas the rival was standing upright and boasting.

An image flashed into her mind, his laughter reminded him of the criminal who slashed her face to pieces without pity.

"Looks like you have to concede defeat, Mako." Tsuba said. Misako didn't reply.

Suddenly she felt charged up and was only half aware of her environment and she slipped into a trance. All Misako felt was the all consuming irrational rage of previous times, she was beyond caring about anything - all she wanted was...

An orange coloured aura flared up and flickered as Mithlos's eyes were shocked,
"Misako… Your aura." He stuttered as Misako's eyes blazed the same shade.

"You were *saying?"* Misako's voice sounded all vacant and beyond herself.

"Mako! Snap out of it!" Devi was scared for the first time, he never saw Misako like this before. He grabbed Misako's shoulders and there was an electrical discharge. There was a crash as she stuck her foot under her rival and floored him.

"Ah, Misako's finally using the Force." Tsuba noted as Devi looked frightened of Misako's expression, cringing in fear.
"Don't worry Devi. In a few seconds she'll snap out of the Force. They always do," Sure enough, Mako's intense aura died down and her expression was of tiredness. "What?" she exclaimed as her eyes returned to the correct colour... "Did I defeat him?" Mithlos groaned in reply.

"Misako…" Devi hesitated briefly. Should he tell Misako about what happened?
"Don't use the Force like that again; you really scared me back there, like you were out of the area for a moment or so."

Misako looked very sophisticated.

"I'll try to remember that, it's just that I remembered that kidnapper's face and the next thing…" Tsuba stared sagely.

"It's alright Mako; emotional events often trigger Force as a destructive result."

The female stulos was shaken, *"Matos,"* she answered as she touched her scar.

After that explosive lesson, Misako decided to head down to the dormitories to check her email.

The computer screen was busy with signals, but then the voice said: "You got C-Mail."

She clicked on the C-Mail icon but then she gasped in shock.

To: makofishesC-Mail.sol

From: coolfanspontimech.sol

Remember me, *Oeyken? I'm watching your every move and I've got a BONE to pick with you and the others. Meet US at Pontimech car sales, otherwise you all regret it!*
The *'Howl's Angels' Nostra Cost…*

"What," Misako said, looking around the room.

Chapter 5: Vanishing

A powerful chord shattered the air as the band *Kayo's Electrets* played loudly.

They were practising for the main audition and the band consisted of several Uni students who were excited about their new concert.

Vixen liked the techno sound; soothed her nerves and great to listen to...

She wished Worsh was there to hear it too, even though she couldn't understand much of the foreign Soluna accents Kayo was yelling out inbetween the female-elf guitarist playing.

"*Walque shine quetos, Oeyken nato Alvenos."* Vixen tried to sing along.

Someone tapped her on the shoulder, but she was too engrossed in the weird music. "Lars!"

"No," A familiar voice shouted, "It's me." Her eyes closed and she turned around.

"Stryker," she said and he nodded. "What are you doing here?"

The boy had sighed in fustration, eyes furtively darting around.

"It's too risky here; Gears Uni had word of…" The cocky boy paled. *"Denara."*

"What about that teacher?" conceded Vixen over the soothing noise of the band.

"Yeah she had been acting lately, like totally out of it. Need your mech."

Vixen was startled, her eyebrows ceased in concentration. "Celestia?"

"Go up to your dorm. Don't stop until you reach it." Stryker yelled. "I mean it."

Flashes of fear highlighting her face, Vixen left the hall as Stryker grinned.

"Vixen has left the building," he told shadowy figures on his holomuniator.

"It's time to take evasive action," The dark man was leaning, his face was partly revealed in the ironically lit room. He had long shaggy bleached hair, a shiny leather trenchcoat covered his thin and awkward frame, contrasting.

The holographic man's face was gaunt and was like a vampdragon's appearance - cute exterior but deadly intentions lurked behind the dancing fiery eyes. He appeared youthful but his eyes denied the truth. The light thrown off from the eyes lit the room temporarily as powered electricity crackled behind the steep chair.

Two men were with him, one of them was the sniper that tried to invade Mecharoni, Ricky.

Ricky told Stryker sternly, "Secure the hall. Make sure no-one escapes or intercedes. I've provided addition backup in the hall, from the courtesty of our great Marquis, Nostra Cost."

Stryker flipped a switch which was near the entrance and immediately green lasers filled the doorway, preventing people from entering.

There was flashes of light as each laser was activated. Luckily, no supervisors there.

Kayo's band was irate; they stopped playing and started yelling insults at Stryker.

"What's the big idea?! You lost our *autrious!"*

The cocky boy grinned viciously as other figures joined him from the back of the hall.

"Get those *stulos."* Stryker snarled a warning. The backup charged.

The lead singer was standing in the way of the gangsters; his stern eyes were slitted in fury.

"Honchos take over Gears Uni?!" Kayo shouted, "We are practising here."

"Not for long," snarled Ricky the sniper as he pushed past the guitarist roughly.

"Would your band side with Dark?" Rick's iron blaster grazed Kaede's face…

Kaede's olive eyes bulged in surprise, her short wild hair stuck out in fear…

This guy was serious, she realised. She was still holding her guitar.

"Dakittu? What intentions?" Kaede demanded insolently.

"*Our* intentions of course. How will our mafia ever regenerate?" the gangster snarled.

"*Dakittu Quorum en Shigu,* Dark requiem our Sign." Harlin the youthful male stated, one of the back-up. revealing that his pale face showed no expression. The band members dropped their instruments in shock as Harlin gave a single signal, palm thrusted at the air.

Kayo was shocked as *they* moved in.

"What's happening?" whimpered Kaede. "Hold me, Dune!" She was scared beyond belief, a electrified light flashed and filled the room as she remembered no longer.

Snarls filled the air, the backup was approaching closer, another loud explosion filled the air, scattering harmful iron particles which settled on the terrified stulos.

There were multiple screams pained in union, echoes replaced by inhuman cries.

Many metallic sounds were apparent and there was a noise similar to rapid buzzing.

"No! You can't!" yelled Kayo as metallic fibres snaked around his hands; replacing his cells with hardening iron. His whole band around him was in the same state.

During the scuffle, a jacket got lost from the fray, laid unnoticed among the seats.

It was then that Kayo collapsed, burning fumes coming off his clothes.

"Kaede," he called. No reply. Then the darkness came for them…

Vixen was up in her dorm, trying to get her thoughts straight.

The human girl started unpacking DVDs of imported Terra movies: *Charm's Angel, Lecka Romance, Finding Sergeant Falcon, Austrian Pi* and *Janet Straus.*

She needed to find out something.

"Where did I put my Mecha keys?!" she muttered as she moused through incense.

Finally finding the bronze keys which were under her bed, Vixen prepared to leave.

There was something wrong with this entire scenario, Vixen replayed the events.

"What? I saw Professor Denara on the way to here." she realised. *Stryker had lied!*

Denara looked perfectly alright, but in her haste Vixen didn't notice her on the way.

She had got to warn music stulos in Kayo's fantastic band… The situation was awful and made her furious just thinking about Stryker's stalling. She would trash that teen.

As Vixen marched determinedly up the stairs towards the concert hall, there was a disconcerting eerie feeling that the plan had gone horribly wrong after she left…

The clues niggled at her mind and alerted her to the totally bizarre situation.

Why was every item disarrayed or shattered in the amphitheatre? The human noticed.

Secondly, why was every stulos kept away from the area and prevented access?

She must get the message across to her grand singer-idol Kayo…!

To her great alarm, fox-lady noticed that there were wires and metal strewn everywhere. Some of the instruments were melted in places; it threw out bright sparking electricity.

"WHAT IN SOLUNA," she gasped.

Ctlus Qui, the uni's best musical stulos, was in tremendous physical pain as she lay…

As the usually calm girl clutched neon drum-sticks she relied on for so long, there was a sudden brief spasm and she rolled over. Tears brimmed in her large soulful eyes.

The delicate girl was barely coherent over her pleading sobs. "Anyone, please help us."

A barely conscious stulos muttered in a low fevered pitch, his grey eyes unfocused.

"They took only Kayo and Kaede… Lariat blesses their souls." Vixen's eyes widened.

Dune gripped the ground desperately as if he was in agony. "I can feel it spread," he breathed through his nose, short pants heard as the teachers gripped the shoulders.

Dune's response were long shattering cries as it revealed patches of iron on his neck.

"AAAHH! Please let it be dreams." the stulos tried to deny what he saw.

"You're delirious, Dune. Calm down." The teacher warned.

Some people were conversing later as Mithlos was trying to get past the door, "Dune!"

As Warlic arrived, the Dean commanded security lasers to shut down.

The powerful presence was terrifying as he strode with such elegance. His ice-blue eyes swept the empty scene where crimes happened; everyone could feel electricity in the hall.

With one sweep, his cold eyes focused on Denara. "Why wasn't I alerted about this?"

The dean's loud demanding voice filled the hall, Vixen peeking from the side.

"It was unintentional," Denara stuttered, "We weren't there at the time." Angry looks…

"We'll have to inform the SPD about incidents yet again, three already!" Warlic yelled.

He paced across the room, his appearance grew isolated, "I'm warning," he said simply.

"It'll take dedicated officers and a hard-case detective to crack this."

Misako was hanging in the dorm once more; she was reading comics she ordered from Tek's Mech. Interested in storylines, she tried to relax while turning pages.

Devi was nearby, creating a huge racket while he was playing ping-pong. *SLAM!*

"Deeta scores 1-nil!" he commented as Dane slammed his fist down. "Up yours!"

"Up yours, wolfie!" blond-haired Dane grinned at his opponent, *"Xuntolv."*

Devi chuckled; constant sound of the light ball bouncing was heard as he served.

"Hey, since you're *so into* this game, can I join?" Misako asked, tilting her head.

"Sure, if you keep up." Dane shrugged. Devi's mobile rang and our Martian picked up.

"Hi, who called?" A long pause. "MUM?! Why in Soluna would you call me *now?"* Devi freaked out totally. "Yes, I've already done the *oeustian course!* Say thanks, to my four sisters? Stop embarrassing my friends! Need to finish firkin energy class? Tsuba calls me Deeta in class. You think it's *cute?* No! I'm independent. *YAWA,"*

Dane laughed hard at his friend's response as Devi shot him a dirty look.

Misako was speechless, Devi had *four* sisters. No wonder he seemed so occupied.

"Okay, I get it. No looking at DVDs for a week. Bye." Devi sighed. "I'm so grounded."

A dorm stulos knocked on the door as many footsteps trekked upstairs.

"SPD investigating unsolved disappearance of two stulos, Chief Duncan is here." Nanuet revealed. Devi instantly donned a deerstalker after grabbing Misako's arm.

Devi was trying to pull her along. "Abide Nanuet. Misako, come and meet Duncan."

"*Wace* for?" Misako interjected as her friend winked…

Chapter 6: Mission

"We're a team, right?" asked Misako as she closed the ejector pad

"Get ready *coset*," warned Devi as the screen recorded Vixen's figure slouching.

His hands were fisted against the main pilot's controls. "Vincor, this is not time."

"I am ready!" yelled an angered Vixen; she put her face as close to her camera.

"Listen, do you want to help Mako on her first mission or not?!" Detective Devi bellowed at the human, meekly Vixen nodded according to his camera input. *Good.*

"Don't address me as Vincor here Devi, we're not in class." *To kelf with Vincor!*

"We shall address you as I please during a SPD mission." Devi spoke coldly.

"*Que Est Ensingh!"* mocked Vixen, making a very sullen face.

"*Aroooo!"* A siren of calls answered as the head of the mecha was revealed in the dismal night. At first, Misako thought the bestial head resembled a rat because of the curving shape of the muzzle, but then she realised glowing electronic eyes were staring blankly at each target…

It was then that the neon-light eyes turned sharply and locked itself onto the first target: *Dearth.* Iron-sheared fangs snapped and smearing oil dripped off the metal teeth.

"Open fire!" yelled Misako as her gold mecha backed into Devi's blood-red one.

"Which one?" asked Devi in total bewilderment? "I see *three* mechas."

"The main one, attack!" the green-haired girl argued back at her friend.

"Three mechas?!" Vixen spluttered as her image reappeared on Devi's screen. "*Wait!*"

The beast mecha in Pontimech towered over the rest of hover-cars before it glowed.

As the robotic machine shone, two apparitions composed of dark-matter took form.

"This is why I hate robot battles," remarked Vixen regretfully as her mecha gleamed…
"Battling robots is dross," Misako replied and Devi rolled his eyes. "What model?"

The black figures of the mecha crouched as the leader mecha gave chase to Vixen…

"Mako! Deeta!" wailed Vixen as the Celestia mecha ran away from the dark ghosts, its huge feet pounding with every step, causing the ground to tremble. "I can't eject!"

"Vincor!" Devi roared as he synchronised the mecha's movement to match his own.

Dearth's hand tried to grab Celestia's cable to stop the female's mecha from moving. *Scrreee!* The thick cable swayed tighter before it snapped in half… Devi gasped.

"*Irota!"* screamed Devi as the robotic beast soon turned on the Martian's robot.

"Arrrrooo!" screeched the terrible beast-mecha, reflector eyes flashing light gray.

Immediately there were random chases through the dark aisles of the car-sales…

Misako was following Devi's trail as Vixen's mecha ran across the tarmac in panic.

The pursuit left a lot of broken mini-vans in the mecha's wake, which annoyed Misako.

Note: I haven't quite finished chapter 6, but wait a while longer.

Vixen panted in fear as the plasma-emitting ghosts gave a huge lunge at Celestia.

"Hang in there!" shouted Misako as her Mecha charged with Volt-Sword in its hand.

Astern unfortunately missed the mark and by chance the sword hit the beast-machine.

"What?!" screamed Devi as Astern's weapon plunged through the lead mecha's core. Sparks began to fly off the sword as the animalistic mecha gave a whining buzz.

"Great going Misako." said Vixen sarcastically, "For a Shanti, you're quite good."

If she had actually hit the ghost…! She noted with a wry sense of humour and sighed.

There was always next time for her friend to improve her aim during a mission.

"What was that?" Devi's intercom voice crackled to life at Vixen's off-track reply.

"You were pleading US to rescue you, and the next minute you are complaining about how Misako's aim wasn't good enough!" His facial expression showed him to be very frustrated at Vixen's reaction to the near-fatal event.

"Listen, Mako. I'm sorry about that joke okay?" apologised Vixen, tears in her eyes.

Chapter 7: Stasis

A sudden ripple penetrated an unstirring solitary mind.

Those thoughts searched inquisitively, unable to wake from the induced coma.

Strong memories caused this human to feel disembodied from his surroundings.
Kaede, where are you? I miss you...

Loneliness grew unbearably strong; he missed his former life in Soluna Uni.

Soon he realised that nothing changed; only a void of icy brightness remained…

The void comforted him throughout his voyage... Familiarity of dreams was plagued by the strange inhuman emotions; those commands were ever present.

As Kayo roamed through this sensational landscape, he saw Kaede playing her dragon-head guitar like she once did.

There was an icy coldness during this memory, like distant mists.

Kaede, remember the band we started? Too bad she liked Dune.

Kayo's disembodied voice spoke sardonically.

Kaede was so indifferent to others, her yellow hair glinted and her olive eyes sparkled in excitement. Her passion for music never wavered.

Suddenly, this memory dissolved rapidly to be replaced, a foxy lady admiring him.

Kayo wasn't sure of how time had passed during his stasis; days and weeks ran into each other, blurring distinctions between thoughts... The sensation of awareness soon spread throughout the awakening human, he could feel the hardening of skin…

Pain ruptured as suddenly Kayo awoke, panting hoarsely.

He was lying on the streets, apparently alone. To his left, he saw piles of frosty snow.

Kayo's mind froze. *Where was he?* Did months pass?

"Wace?" His voice was dry and cracked as if he didn't drink for ages.

"This isn't funny." He tried to laugh, but it came out harsh and mechanical…

"Kaede, where in Kelf are you?!" His voice echoed as if he was away from others.

He glanced at his hand and once more Kayo was stunned...

His fingers were flesh, now they gleamed and shone as metal.

Instantly a tingling command at the back of his mind told him: *Turn around.*

Kayo felt like a puppet as he obeyed. *WACE?!* There were teens behind him!

"We know where Kaede is," said Harlin. A shivery smile of gratitude lit up Kayo's face.

"Great! Lead the way, Harlin." he spoke discreetly. Harlin's smirk slackened.

"How did you know my name?" the rough teen yelled as he ushered towards dark place.
Kayo winced, *how DID I know his name? Oeyken tell me?* "Database access,"
"*Hellion,* don't know firkin Soluna databases." Harlin swore. Anxiously, Kayo waited.

Floorivator hummed as Harlin explained they were 'borrowing' it from a friend.

At last, the floorivator reached correct floor, Kayo literally jumped for joy.

"Kaede, I came." he called desperately, no answer.

His heart now sunk in sorrow as his friend came rushing through the door, undeniably altered from what she looked like before.

He could hardly recognise the Oeyken that was before him...

"Kayo," he wisphered, scarely believing his eyes...

Her hair was silvery and shimmered in that still familiar hairstyle.

Her pale saffron eyes were unnerving and most of all; she had copper patches on her metallic arms, giving her a beautiful searing contrast to the rest of her human body.

She was wearing skin tight clothing that revealed her metalic form.

Tears glittered on her face. "Kayo," the Oeyken wailed, burying her face in his arms.

Kayo was confused; angrily he turned on Harlin and grabbed the front of his shirt.

"What have *you* done to us?" the singer snarled as his arm suddenly morphed into a form which suited his sudden rush of anger. What was happening?!

Kaede watched in pure fascination as his arm became like an arcade-game claw.

It made the job easier, he picked up Harlin with ease. Harlin's feet dangled in the air

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"You should be asking, what WE have done to you."

A new voice responded, a chair turned as sniper Ricky stepped forwards, his body was now transformed to be like a wolf's. His fur was a dark brown and he was squat ugly.

Kayo yelped and immediately dropped Harlin's body, "Xanotolvs!"

"Correct, we are Lycans." Ricky rasped out as the telepathic Vampragon-man chuckled.

"Marquis Therus had assigned you special assignments of Dakittu." Ricky continued.

"We have enhanced your builds - making it invulnerable to mecha-fire, installed our commands in your

configured 'hardware' and morphed human flesh." Therus smiled.

"This is a disgrace," Kayo yelled, "What missions?" Marquis Therus leant forwards.

"I have configured both of you stulos to be… assassinators." Kayo paled in shock.

"Oh, Loritha, no way!" whispered Kaede. Ricky's face sniffed Kaede's face, "Do it."

"Who do you want us to assassinate?" The awful truth dawned. *Acquiring software…*

"Have you heard of the SPD?" Therus queried. Kaede shook her head meekly.

The leader sent a random hologram of various people before selecting four of them.

"These people in particular are investigating our little niche. We cannot allow them."

Kaede's face was blank, "Who are those stulos?" Kayo recognised them.

"Oh no, not those four! Please Loritha…" As the words exited, he felt a stirring within.

Rote-memorisation is complete, store in memory database.

"I want you to deal with them before ten lunar-cycles," ordered Therus.

His free-will ebbing away, the last conscious thought Kayo had before his mind was configured to Marquis Terus's command: *I have to warn Vixen.*

Soluna Dictionary:

Alvenos - boy/male
autrious - audience
Dakittu - Dark or Darkness
Holomuniator - Holographic-communicator
oeustian - A specific Martin course
Quetos - quietly
Quorum - reqieum
Shigu - Sign
nato - To meet, encounter
Walque - Sun
Xuntolv - Wolf
Xanotolvs - Werewolf
Yawa - Martian expression, similar to 'get lost'

Chapter 8: Ghost in the Mech

Officer Misalo

Chapter Eight: The Mech-hunters

"So far we have found various clues at the aforementioned crime scenes: A patch of unidentified hair, 'Howl's Angel' motorcycle jacket and some unlabelled food boxes." Devi stated as the Pilot plodded down to police station. He was wearing his sleuth hat as he tapped opened notebook surreptitiously with his laser pen. Vixen trailed behind as if she had something to hide, back hunched forwards as her chatty attitude evaporated.

Numerous vehicles blocked the route to the SPD, the drivers hooted sound systems at each other in distain. There seemed to be converged points in the road where Gears Pilots drove their mecha, leaving cracked holes in concrete at least half a metre deep.

Out of the blue, a flashing crimson minivan charged out of nowhere and parked itself in front of the two partners. It had silvery headlights and patterns on van's hood.

"What are all commotions and deep holes about?" A female driver yammered at Devi; the lady tossed her yellow shades hard at the Soluna Department detective in frustration. "I'm supposed to test drive here! Tarmac is all torn up and ripped." she screeched.

"According to announcements at Gears Uni, there seems to be a Shadowscythe war." Vixen stated calmly, not wanting to alarm the poor rose-haired lady. Unfortunately, it seemed to have the adverse effect upon the minivan driver.

The lady squealed in recognition. "Devi-chan!" she leapt out of her minivan. "I'm so sorry I didn't see you there! Did I hurt you, bro? How's your Uni so far! Long *chromos* no see. No scratch on your poor face?" It was then that the groovy Uni student noticed she had darkened scales in places; clearly the female driver must have been not human.

Vixen was startled, "Devi! Do you know this lady? Who is she?" she demanded.

Detective Devi blushed in embarrassment, "She's my third sister, Pascha." he explained

"She works around Soluna, getting odd jobs around the clock. Paschie; stop teasing me!"

"Mum's been so worried about you ever since the mobile call! Do you like new tat?"

"*Wace!* You got a tattoo?" the detective certainly didn't like the sound of that.

"Yeah, do you like it?" Pascha laughed suavely as she revealed an arm tattoo.

The tattoo had an image of a flaming azure dragon with a Mecha underneath it.

No response, but Devi turned an odd shade of florescent red. "Paschie?"

The sleuth's voice was very stern towards his sister, Pascha flinched. "No tattoos?"

Vixen was curious, why was Pascha being so oblivious towards her brother.

"Paschie, I told you I don't like dragons – not even if it's a tattoo." He said quietly.

"But brother," wailed Pascha dramatically, "I love dragons, even if they were extinct!"

"I know about it! Weeks ago you kept asking about robotic dragons at Gears Uni."

Devi turned around dismissing thoughts of telling Pascha off. *Such a drama queen...*

"You'll let me invent robots, right?" Pascha persisted, pulling Devi's arm very tightly.

"Soluna still has some spare parts leftover from Shadowscythe wars. I can weld!"

Without a word, Vixen dragged Pascha away, so that she could breathe. "Wait!"

Such a keen Martian-girl! Gnarly minivan though. Vixen noted with a tinge of desire.

It was comical. Gangly, scaly Martian girl with sandstone hair hauled around by a fiery-haired female half her total height.

"Quite a chatterbox, you know that?" chided Vixen.

Didn't take much to convince Pascha to leave, slyly Devi offered his *Slug XV* album.

Once Pascha was ushered back to minivan and said farewell, there was silence.

"Heh, Pascha can't stop obsessing over dragons, her sole fixation. Back to my notes," Devi laughed derisively as Vixen stated,

"Your sister seems awfully keen on dragons." They continued walking along narrow roads.

Suddenly, there was a loud shout.

"Hey, Johnson!" said a familiar voice around the corner as a handsome and youthful man wearing a black tuxedo raced past.

Officer Misako was apparently trying to interview him.

"I'm mysteriously confused!" yelled Johnson, "I swear those ghosts went that way."

Devi chased after that man, tailcoat flapping in breeze "Johnson, wait up!"

The man stopped running.

"Sorry," panted Mysterious Johnson, owner of *Optical Illusions.* "You know, I run a business around here, Belaya escaped."

"Who's Belaya or whatever it is." Misako challenged. "I'm very suspicious."

"Woah, ghosts" Detective Devi commented in awe, "Sir Johnson, I commemorate you."

The Martian scribbled in his notebook rapidly before tearing out pages. He was trying to concentrate, "It looks like this?"

A badly drawn scribble with an arrow saying '*Ghost'* was on many pages...

Misako stared in glee, "Devi, I think it is a mecha." She pointed out.

"That's right, miss Irwa." Johnson nodded, "Possessing random mechas around town."

At this statement, Vixen jumped up excitedly.

"I can't wait to be Mecha-hunter," the human squealed, "Join your gnarly awesome cause! Please?"

The tuxedo-man blushed.

"Very well, Vixen." Johnson sighed, "but be wary of the full cost. Catch!"

Ghost trap soared in the air and Misako caught it before handing it to her friend.

"Koko, thank you!"

Koko was Misako's nickname and it made her embarrassed.

"Please don't call me that in front of the suspect," The officer pleaded.

Shadows shifted and it flashed into a nearby robot, Devi's eyes widened. "My mecha!"

Instantly, there was a grinding sound as robot soon came to life.

It seemed to Devi that valour was shattered as it metal head lifted up and flashed once. "It's possessed!"

Dearth screeched as Johnson threw a powder, he recognised ghost in mecha.

Misako gave it a wide berth; she sensed aura around the mecha glowing. "Vixen,"

Instantly Vixen gasped sharply as if in pain. Her lips parted, but no sound came out.
"Vixen, tell me. Is it the Force?" Misako recognised visible signs of strain in Vixen.
No reply, the officer was beginning to get scared. She recognised the symptoms.
"It's alright, you're in no danger. You're fine." Knowing she couldn't hear words.
Vixen was speechless, how could she explain

Chapter 9: The Incoming Storm

'*Sally Coffronze, Pilot reporter of 'Gears-Station News' reporting odd incidents which occurred outside Mysmero Johnson's 'Optical Illusions'. A possessed crimson robot rampaged through peaceful Soluna this evening, disrupting traffic reports then trampled on both innocent bystanders and Shadowscythe soldiers.'*

'The robot caused cascade of chaos to pour down on our city areas and instantly exploded shortly afterwards, burning one person called Smokey, who is unavailable to comment. (Sorry for rambling)'

A smartly dressed Gears student in her best reporter-uniform stood awkwardly as camera captured the close-up view of chaos that erupted shortly before. The lady dressed in dark red jacket which reached to her knees and green shades.

Sally looked shyly at the hologram-producing camera. "Ack, I look awful in this shot," she yelled.

Dean Warlic stomped up to the female reporter, "Sally, why aren't you in class?"

"Dean, I *have* to do this, it's my new project!" Reporter Sally shouted, spilling coffee on her jacket.

"Yeah, it's the coolest fad!" Doodler commented as he thumbs-up Sally, recording everything on the camera,

"Oooh, Mechas! I can't wait for interviews," Warlic frowned.

"Very well if I see stray footage of aliens, then report to my office!" he barked.

"Right on!" Doodler winked as the Dean got tangled in his camera's wires.

'*And according to my research, here are the eyewitnesses.'* Sally crowed in excitement.

'*Mysmero Johnson and Devi Whirl, the Soluna-famous investigator!'*

'*Of course, the blame solely rests on Devi Whirl, mainly because it was his Mecha and robot was responsible for the widespread destruction it caused.'* Sally blinked at her notes as Devi was interrogated by the confounded reporter.
His reaction was to groan loudly, "Who wrote the interview anyway?!"

Helia's expression was distained and of pride, ignoring the media chaos and holding her head high. "Can we get on with this?"

Sally fired one question at Johnson, *'Where were you at the time of the incident?'*

"Outside my shop, of course I had to look after the practical-jokes ware,"

'*So you deny having anything to do with the event? What was the ghost?'* she yelled.

"Eh? Yes, I deny being at the scene at the time." Johnson cocked his head in confusion.

'*So what had caused the outbreak of possessed Mechas then?'* Sally was at her wits end.

"No idea, all I remember is trying to hold off the attack of Mechas." Johnson shrugged.

"I object," Sleuth Zenith retorted; he was a middle-aged man with creamy hair and muscular frame. "Misako and I were in his shop when the event happened and he was inside too, he's a liar."

'*Can you describe what happened during the afternoon?'* Sally fumbled through notes.

"Devi's firkin Mecha tore through the entire roof of one of the shops...! It was causing collateral damage to clothing and other miscellanious items before shutting down of its own accord. It blasted the windows as well."

"I see," Sally was frustrated at how poorly the interview was going, thinking of the viewers.

'*Alright, alvenos Devi, it's your turn!'*

'Shortly before 6 o' clock EST, there was loud explosion which decimated the shops; can you, a detective and private investigator, tell us who was involved in the incident? We're live.'

"Uhhhh… No comment." The detective declined, so he didn't get his friends in trouble.

A vein stood out on Sally's forehead, emphasizing her short temper, Devi's face froze.

'*Current research tells me that you're working on special Police cases. Can you tell us what your investigation involves?'* don't lie to me whispered Sally to Devi's ears.

"I shall the clues: SPD has found wolf hair, food boxes and jacket."

'*And there we have it, an official report from one of SPD sleuths.'* Sally smiled modestly, before spilling her coffee again...

'Also on other unrelated news, two missing students from the University have yet to be found. Their names are confirmed to be Kayo Maple and Kaede Regalis. Noone has seen them since two months ago, last term. If anyone has any word of them or have witnessed their return, please contact the Station and we'll get right on the job, right Doodler?'

Just then, a random event happened. Firstly, Duncan appeared on the scene, looking haggard. Sally stepped aside for the round Police Cheif, "Wait, I have terrible news." he gasped. "One of our best police guards, Palenz Catlain..." he looked shocked.
"What? Can you explain what happened?" Sally asked. Duncan looked downwards as if unable to face the truth.

"Palenze was discovered horrendously injured outside Johnson's shop, he was unable to speak and tell us who was his attacker. His entire arm was ripped apart at the seams and there was bleeding in some places. It seems as if someone or *something* was behind this gory event... But there was also a note found: *The Sign of Dakittu has returned, you all of the SPD, are running out of time fast, I suggest you surrender to us, 'cause I have been notified... Beware of the cyborgs. Marquis of the Light Vampron.*"

He paused momentarily "Take my word, I want all of the police to be on full alert from now on, this is the uprising of crime!"

Chapter 10: Macabre Maze

Officer Misako

Author's Notes: I made a slight mistake last chapter... I got the surnames the wrong way round. It's supposed to be *Kayo Regalis and Kaede Maple*, but it got mixed up. Also, there are some great movie references in this chapter, can you name all the movies?!
Also, thanks to Blade100 for his wonderful characters from '*A Rouge's Tale'!*
(Note: Continues after chapter five of A Rogue's tale)
You should read his DF fanfic too. And now for my first disclaimer!
Disclaimer: *I do not own Alexander or Kaiser, 'Mechquest' Alexander belongs to Blade100 and 'Mechquest' Kaiser belongs to Kaiser Alderman...*

"Admina Strator!" Warlic roared as the blond girl winced, "How come Runehawk's stulos are still stuck in Pandora's Labyrinth?"Admina swept over touch-keyboards, glancing at the holographic screen. "I do not know; it shouldn't take them long!" Her voice started rising in a sudden panic. "Simulation's starting to collapse, sir!" Warlic was dazed. "It's impossible," he spoke as if in deep grief, "Runehawk lost its members, contact Jania, miss Admina."

"You called, Dean?" Jania responded; azure hair waving and her silent eyes accused the Dean.

Dean collapsed into a stiff wooden chair in his office, covering his face. "Jania please,"
Just then Jania frowned, was it just her or did Warlic seemed more *depressed* than usual?
It was then that she knew. Runehawk's students' dorms seemed strangely empty yesterday according to one of the teachers surveying them, but she had merely ruled out both procasination and sickness from her list.

"*Wace!* My stulos are stuck in Amina's maze of *kelf?"* Jania blazed with fury, pointing her shaking finger at poor Warlic who was shrunken with innate fear. "Get Them Out!" she roared, "or I'll never ever, *ever* forgive you, little snugglekin." Admina nodded, this was no laughing matter... But still quietly she chuckled at Warlic's shellshocked expression.

"Yes, dear Jania," replied Warlic as if he was stunned by a boulder, "I will ask every stulos in my University to attend assembly... Disregarding Runehawk, of course." he added after Jania was ferociously irate at his response. His deep voice was rather sloppy and lorn. "Sorry,"

"Sorry doesn't cut it, Warlic Blackmange." came Jania's biting comment back at the dean.
"I expect some either some brave or totally naive stulos to rescue my Runehawk house...!"

Warlic flinched, "Yes Jania, I shall announced this in my assembly, the *atrious* would listen."

"My dear fellow Stulos," Warlic began. Everyone attempted to listen, but were too bored.
"As you know, Gears and Mecha University prides itself on Mechanical excellence of the highest order. Due to some catrosphere, Pandora's virtual Labrinyth has been disclosed to the public, because of several... *accidents."* At this, he glared at Admina "Accidents, which were- unpreventable because of several unknown computer hackers." he repeated. "Yes."

"That's some speech, Warlic!" said Sys-Zero, the only one clapping with one hand. Jania didn't look too impressed with the Dean's performance. "The following Runehawk stulos were trapped in the maze, who also can't get out: Alexander Drufus, Kaiser Ottoman, Sally Coffronze, Olapen Jinitro and somehow..."
Warlic paused. "some undistingushable name. Anyone foolish enough to enter the maze... will meet their

DDOOOOOOOMMM!" Warlic finished rather lamely.

"We'll do it," volunteered Vixen as Misako tried to shush her loud friend. Unfortunately, the soundwaves carried out in the mostly empty hall and caught the Dean's alert attention.
"Well, well." grinned Warlic, "Soon to be Wolfblade warriors and rustic Runehawk stulos," *Perfect and exceeellent!, I shall inform Admina of this unexpected development!*

Warlic lead both Misako and Vixen to Runehawk's computer terminal. It was the weirdest thing ever seen. All around the terminal several *stulos* connected to wired goggles and body-suits which hummed, but that wasn't weird in itself. It was how they reacted while connected to terminal, some of them were screaming, others were twitching in agony and others were talking to a wall. "Ookay." Misako sweated, *downright weird. Should belong to the Twilight Zone.*

"My mind's purged *over and over!"* screeched Alexander Dufus, a Runehawk stulos.

"It's over 9,000." Sally Coffronze screamed in agony. "Make it *stop!* Coffee!"

"Leet, it created a monster!" shrieked Kaiser in pain, rocking backwards. "AAHH!"

"We're going to killed, aren't we?" gasped Devi blindly, attached to the terminal.

"*Devi?!"* Vixen froze in recognition, "You're not in Runehawk and Jania told us."

"Now you can see *our problem,"* Warlic stated ironically calm, "can't get them out."

Vixen slid up to Dean Warlic, Misako did likewise - and Jania was confident that these two stulos would help Runehawk house regain its rank. Jania smirked victoriously and Vixen caught the expression on the Runehawk's face. It didn't seem to be a good-natured one.

"We'll do whatever it takes," the two girls yelled together in usion, "Just get our friends out!"
Jania rolled her eyes in exasperation, "Fine, if that's how desperate you all are, girls these days."
"We're not desperate little sods!" they protested, Jania grinned in delight at their anger...
Pressing a finger against their noses, she scolded them harshly.
"Then do it, rescue my stulos." the Runehawk house-leader shouted at the duo.
"You don't have to be soooo loud," Vixen shot back, really annoyed with Jania.

It was just as if ice-cold water was doused over them as the virtual maze built itself.

It felt like sea-spray to the face, *Brr, cold!* Misako could see foundations of the maze rising from the floor, neon blue walls constructing itself. There was tingling and a virtual replica of her gold Mecha popped out of nowhere, complete with wire connected.

"Well, doesn't look bad," Our heroine shouted emphatically to her best friend,
"Virtual reality sure rocks!" *How this maze is considered hard for Runehawk, hah!*

"Let's Tron!" yelled Vixen and her loud voice was unrestrained, "Yeeha! We're going to rock this joint like it's the year 3000!" The flame-haired girl clambered into her virtual mecha and started grooving away like one of those disco robot. "Look, I'm John Travolta from Terra!"

"Eh, Vixen." Misako pointed out as she sweatdropped, "It is the year 3000. Unless that was your attempt at humour? And who's John Travolta anyway?" Vixen laughed in glee. "Am you missing the point of my joke? That was sarcasm." Vixen started singing a gnarly pop song, which was pretty catchy as she lumbered towards a dead-end wall.

"Oh great," she grumbled.

Three hours later… They were still at it, racing through the maze at a top-notch speed, several times both Vixen and her friend got lost, so they had to retrace their steps. Surprisingly, the enemy mechas were totally low-levelled and easy to manage at first...

As they went along and between mecha battles, Vixen was telling Misako about the Greece mythologies of planet Terra, which they both enjoyed until Amina checked their progress and scolded both of them. "Vixen and Misako, have you forgotten your mission? Thanks to your laziness, the maze is even more corrupted by hackers than before and Runehawks are almost at their tether. *So get a move on!"*

"Battle on!" Misako cheered enthusticastically as they continued onwards... That is until she crashed into another neon-blue wall. "This is way too easy!" Her virtual mecha stamped on the broken remants of the Rifle-master, "I hadn't had this much fun since... well, since ever." she admitted as Vixen's image flashed onto the cockpit screen. Vixen looked really scared of something approaching her mecha from behind, seeing something that was beyond the camera. "What's wrong, Vixen?"

"Misako... You might want to consider running out of here." she panted really loudly, fog obsurinig the screen. Sliding back into the seat, Misako was confused, just what was that dark shadow from behind Vixen's mecha-camera... Well, whatever it was, it was extremely large and had... Silver horns of some kind. Gigantic copper horns at least a foot long that curved inwards. Plus steam poured out of its nostrils as it clenched a giant ray-gun. No fur in sight, only metal surface. "Vixen! Look out, it's a Minotaur!" she remembered that Greek myth.

"WACE?!" cried Vixen as the Minotaur robot roared and gorged its horns into the Mecha. It made a terrible screeching sound as the Minotaur-robot lifted up the whole thing like it was a toy, before tossing the virtual mecha into the air. To her shock, the creation had no trouble defending itself. The green mecha made a whistling sound as it collasped into a heap. Misako could have slapped herself, why couldn't she recognise the monstrous form earlier?!

"Shimei? Vixen, that thing hurt you pretty bad? Can you speak?" she asked, just then the whole green Mecha shuddered before it defragmented into tiny colourful bits of data. It flew towards the other side of the maze. "I'm alright," revealed Vixen a few minutes later, "But I'm back at the restart of the maze! AARRG. I have to go through it again to find Runehawk! Hey, there's a Runehawk stulos right here!" The human female remarked, "Kaiser!"

"I'm scared, I'm scared, I'm scared of the mecha!" revealed Kaiser, rocking back and 'fords.

"No time for talk," yelled Misako, "Oh shimei! It looks like this minotaur's going to blow! Yikes!"
"It missed me by this much!" An explosion boomed shortly afterwards. "I'm still alive!"
Immediately afterwards, some of the remaining robots on the field shuddered and exploded. Spraying virtual metal everywhere. "Talk about bad timing." screamed Vixen, "Misako!"

"It's like a minefield, Loritha help me!" Trying to dodge the explosions were more difficult than anyone could think, for starters one wrong slip or turn could potentially end the game. Leaping from ledge to ledge, it was a race against time and time was running out fast as more of them exploded.

Just then there was a blur as another robot crashed in front of the Mecha. Misako checked the stats gauge on the virtual screen as it lit up: "HP is 9, 000! No wonder Sally had so much trouble with this one! Strange, last time I checked the robot wasn't that difficult." she mused to herself in the cockpit. Glancing at the screen on the left, she noticed something strange and bizzare:

The robot shimmered incandencely, as if it was a holographic computer glitch or something similar. "Unless, this maze was hacked by someone who knew the internal coding of the V-R!" she realised, not realising that she spoke out loud, there was a loud snort as Vixen heard that comment.

"Duh, Mako gal, even I could have figured that out! And I'm no IPT technican." Kaiser pointed out, broadcasting now in Vixen's camera. "And did I mention you do look hot!" It was then that Misako promptly turned off the screen, to the annoyance of poor Kaiser. "Alvenos these days."

"Hey! Don't step on me!" cringed Alexander as a huge golden mecha-foot almost squished him. Hearing a loud shout, the girl craned her neck closer to the screen right next to the seat, it was a teenage boy with very messy looking hair and he was wearing a blue suit with fancy emblems.

Alexander breathed a sigh of relief, "Did I mention thank goodness you're here?!" He dusted his Runehawk uniform, bruises were apparent on his face and arms. He flinched as he leapt up,
"Hey, your mecha looks just like Misako's! How are you today?" he smiled affectionately.

"1. How did you know it was me? 2. How long were you Runehawks stuck in the maze?" Misako didn't feel like making idle chitchat, she was determined to get out of the virtual maze asap in at least two hours.

Alexander laughed, "It's not everyday you see a gold Mecha wearing a black cat-mask! You've gotta help us, we've been stuck here for 15 hours already! It's a firking nightmare I don't want to repeat ever again, please get us out of here! Misako, take my hand."
"What? Are you suggestive or something?" asked Misako, pretty annoyed with him.

"No, really, climb out of your Mecha for a minute, I want to show you where the stulos are." Alexander demanded. "I have bruises and cuts already and they sting a lot from the explosions."
"Okay, if you insist, but I'll rather prefer to stay in here. It's more feasible that way."
Alexander sighed in desperation, "Mako-kan, come on out!" he pleaded, "I want to see you."
Misako smiled in ingeniousity. "How 'bout this!" she realised, "You ride on *my* Mecha!"
Alexander looked like he was going to faint with joy. "Alright! Mako, you rule the cosmos!"

"I'm the king of the world!" Alexander hollered at the top of his lungs, "Wahoooooo!" He clung to the hard mecha as Misako directed the virtual Mecha through the maze. "There, there I see the Runehawks," he pointed out. "Hey Runehawk Alvenos and others! Look yon here!"

The group of Runehawks stulos were dusty, huddled together and raggedly. The various stulos looked up with tired eyes and slouched backs. They looked world-weary and pained with the virtual maze itself.
"Hello," Misako stated, "What happened here?"
A tired looking stulos had a blank expression. "Well, which do you want to hear first?"

"So you're saying that one of the Runehawks are now missing, and that all your Mechas are broken by a strange looking person? Plus all of your mana are vanished now." Misako couldn't believe the tale, but she deduced it was somehow connected to all the SPD cases that happened over the past few months. "Olapen Jinitro, hmm...? I've heard of her." They nodded.

Great, ANOTHER missing person, exactly what I needed at the SPD office..
"We've been calling for her for the past hour. It's like she dissapated into air or something."
"That's impossible. For starters, this is a virtual game, everyone." Alexander snarkily said.
"Secondly, how can anyone from this plane of existance absorb everyone's mana?"

"Does THIS answer your question?!" said a familar male voice of a singer from a band.

The Runehawks stulos screamed in recognition at the figure, the glowing neon walls illuminated his human-like face. For the life of herself, Misako couldn't bring herself to recognise that person, she was too far away to see his full frontal face...
Suddenly, in less than a second, Alexander stood in front of the virtual Mecha.
"You can't get past me!" the Alvenos dared, the cyborg's face darkened in obscure anger.
"I'll be back, Alvenos." The male cyborg sang with pure rage, as instantly, his right hand transfomred into an instrument of pain. A dark realisation took place on Alexander's face.
"Oh yawa!" he swore as the cyborg pushed him aside roughly.

I should have ripped your arm when I got the chance," Kayo snarled inhumanly, with an iron-knife for a hand, he sliced through the virtual mecha like butter. All she could do was staring in terror at the humanoid machine dominating her vision. *"Oeyken!"*
Maid. She was his *maid* to toy with, and there was little any of the Runehawk could do. Is it?

"Leave her alone," boomed Alexander, "Our rescuer's innocent!" Kayo laughed wildly.

Immense confusion as Kayo smashed through her cockpit and grabbed the only arm holding control. Kaiser attempted to prise his grip, but Kayo tossed him aside.

Misako gritted her teeth in retaliation as he twisted it, *mustn't scream, mustn't*- She glimpse a steely cruel look in the cyborg's eyes, it was agony not to scream in V-R, much less remember that this was a simulation. *Alas, that weakness. Is it possible to be killed in a simulation? Even if this isn't a real experience? But it feels SO real to me.*

Suddenly Kayo jolted backwards, sensing her thoughts, "It isn't possible," he withdrew his arm, "Your will for life burns just like your own mana!" For some moments Misako saw humanity in his eyes, and felt hers widen. "You're- you're Kayo. The missing."

"*Damn straight"* Kayo used a Terra word as he reverted back to his steel voice.
"Misako, forsaken marked one, you realised that your tine will be up soon?"

"What are you talk-?" questioned Vixen, there was loud noise camouflaged his words.

BOOMCRASH! A section of the wall crumbled away as a dark-red mecha appeared.

"Hey, Runehawk *Alvenos* and *Oeyken!*" Devi waved as Kayo snarled and jumped away.

"Yay, Devi!" smiled Misako and Vixen, the rest of Runehawk were like 'Huh?'

"Who is this cool teen?" wondered Alexander, "Is he cool?" Kaiser stunned him.

"Did you come from Mystraven maze?" Devi nodded. "It's crushable, *cheat to win!"*

"What? Devi, so is this the answer to getting out of this maze?" Sally yelled.

"Yes, the firkin code is 0E5K4L3! Hurry," Devi urged. "Simulation's gonna crash."

"Wait for me," panted Vixen as she finally caught up with the others. "We don't wanna get trapped here! Do we, Kaiser?" she asked her occupant. Kaiser shook his head. Admina flashed on screen, "10, 9..."

"*This is WOLFBLADE!"* Misako yelled as huge heavy iron sword crashed into Kayo then twirled into her Mecha's hand. Kayo howled in apparent agony, clutching his arm. "Alright, every Runehawk stulos, grab onto the mecha! Go!" Devi's virtual had to grab onto the cord as well as Vixen's mecha. All of the

Runehawks quickly grabbed on to the mecha...
"8, 7, 6, 5, 4..." continued Admina as though calmed down.

"This is insane!" screamed Alexander as his friend Kaiser held onto the giant Mecha. Then the string drew every stulos into fast-forward blur as the Mecha whizzed through to the maze's entrance. "WHEEE!" agreed Sally.

"3, 2, 1... Computer shutdown activated!!!" Immediately, the entire scenario shuddered and dissolved and there was darkness and the Runehawk stulos screeched in joy some more. The ride never seemed to end: *MAZE COMPLETED.* Finally a distant crash and everyone felt sea-spray on their face before waking up to their reality…

Misako removed her V-R head-gear immediately, still shivering from the sea-spray effect. Her arm ached dully as if it was twisted. This was one wild ride she wasn't likely to forget. Vixen breathed "Woah," and Devi shook his body like a *Xuntolv.*

"Welcome backs to our reality everyone!" Amina smiled, "The maze is complete!"

As soon as Alexander removed his VR goggles, he rolled his eyes and fainted. Likewise Kaiser and Sally did as well – *CLONK!* Loud thuds hit floor. "I'm sure they'll be okay," exclaimed Warlic, "Mana was completely drained, but Runehawk will survive, provided they rest." Alex started snoring in response to Warlic's comment…

"Warlic, while we were playing, we saw… Kayo." Vixen stated. Warlic was shocked.

"Kayo? Was he trapped in there?" he demanded at the stulos. "Where's Kaede?"

"You don't understand, Kayo's a cyborg and he's out to stalk us." Devi shivered.

"Don't think about such morbid stuff," snorted Warlic, "You're safe at Gears."

Meanwhile:

"I can't believe you didn't target that red-haired girl!" Kaede snarled as she withdrew her copper finger away from the computer terminal, ejecting the hacked data along with it.
"Don't blame me, blame my programming" Kayo protested, a resounding slap from Kaede.
"Listen, cyborgs. Don't take it too harshly," Therus stated as he youthfully smiled. "After all, they're running out of options. Oh, and I still require my daily Quo essence, heheeheee."

"Right away Marquis. That Runehawk stulos will do quite nicely." Harlin interjected as he dragged a familar looking stulos to the Marquis's side. "Just as you ordered, fair brother."

Chapter 11: Blind Dates

Officer Misako: Blind Date Special...

Author's Notes: Hello Mechquest players! It's valentine's day and you know what that means!
A Valentine day special! *YAY!* So we'll cross live to the action! I thought it would be funnier if the Blind-date quest really *was* a date. Any suggestions or requests for future chapters? Review.

Disclaimer: Alexander belongs to Blade100.

"Roses are blue, Violets are red, I expect a Mecha-hug from you! Love Cluthu? What the-?" responded Devi in delight as hundreds of C-Mail tumbled through his inbox, each one of them was addressed to him. "Coolskis," He laughed, "I guess they really liked my interview with Sally... or possibly my dear Deerstalker hat. Although," His smile faded as he re-read the C-mail card once more. "Does Cthulu truly like me or my Mecha...? Aw, darn. She loves my mecha!"
Devi Whirl realised as the martian Alvenos blushed even redder at the words.

"She loves me," squealed Mithlos, bursting into the room, the fern green-haired male stulos singing and dancing in delight, "She truly does love me!" Everyone in the dorm looked up in surprise. "Who does?" asked Dune, trying to get used to his cybernetic arm.

Mithlos had a sound grin on his face. "My seeeecret admirer...!" he smiled blissfully.

"Riiight." responded Dane, "Love is such a blaise thing, what with the C-Mail and all that stuff."... "Wait, let me look at the C-Mail to see whether it is certified."
He glanced at the C-Mail address before handing it back to a determined Mithlos.
"Well?" demanded Mithlos, bouncing up and down in delight.
"It's a fake." stated Dane, before handing it back to the poor stulos, as his face was crestfallen.
"No way!" screamed Mithlos in anguish as the other Alvenos shouted in laughter at him.
"Poor Mithlos Straus, he still has to get used to rejection." Dane shook his head.

Meanwhile in the other dormitory, someone else was moping and not joining into the fun:

"Things haven't been the same since Olapen Jinitro was missing." admitted Alexander, glancing at the recent holographic photo in mourning. A single tear streaked down his face as he put his head down and started staring up at the photo in dismay. "Now I only have her *school photo* to remind me of her." he muttered in dismay as he flipped on his bed and stared at the ceiling.

"Geez 'lex, you *do* sound like you need something to cheer you." observed Quentin, Alex's dorm partner as the spiky haired tomboy saw Alexander's reaction to the photo...

The wild-haired Oeyken sat near his bunk bed. "I'm sure some people in this universe are lonely all their lives and all the *chromos*, at least you had someone involved."

"Take me for example, I don't even have a date. I might as well take my own Mecha to the date...! haha!" She pointed out cheekily as depressed Alexander stated "Oh," softly as though he didn't hear any of the girl's persistent rambling.

"Well, if you don't cheer up soon Alexander, Valentine's day will soon be over." protested Mithlos, "Then you'll have to wait one whole solar cycle to begin again!" Alexander sighed.

"I guess," he muttered, his eyes were downcast in the sombre light, "I better get used to the fact that she's not *ever* coming back... I just wondered what had happened to her..." He trailed off.

Just then whirlwind Devi rushed past the Dormitory excitedly...
(sort of like a white-haired hyperactive Taz from Looney Tunes if you could picture *that)*
"Alexander and Quentin, my two best buddies in the entire cosmos! Guess what?!"
('So *we* don't count?' questioned a furious Misako and Vixen out of character.)

"I've got 32 different C-cards from ten different Oeyken stulos! I'm pretty lucky!" he added in absolute happiness. Quentin laughed gaily. "That's gotta be a universe record," she added.
"What card did Vixen get?" requested Quentin. Devi winked in humour, "Not many."

"How about Mako-san," winked Dune hyperfast. "Of course with that recognisable scar of hers, it's gonna be hard for her to get any decent dates, unless some of you somehow ended up on Crazy Eddies's *Blind-Quest* dating game-show..." The band-member laughed to himself...
Devi now turned tomato red in response... "Don't you diss my friend like that, saying that nonsense in front of her should give you a decent *kelf!*" He finished speaking seriously.

"Woah, Deeta. That's harsh." Dune stared back at Devi. "Anyway, I think you need Poozom."
"Yeah? So that I can turn undead? Why not to that to yourself, you bully." argued Deeta... Quentin noticed the glint in the detective's flint-hard eyes, as though he was hurt by comments.
"Listen Devi, Alexander need to be happy for a while, why don't you take him to the concert?"
Devi looked rather glumly at Alexander. "If you so insist, come on 'Lex."

"Good afternoon Soluna Alvenos and Oeykens," introduced Admina cheerfully. "Today we have a special treat for all of you lovey-dovey aliens, humans and all in between!" A cheer of rapture came from many of the agreeing stulos as they clapped their hands and their cyborg arms.

"Dean Warlic has arranged this special arena for all the stulos in order for you people and aliens to have the day of your lives!" exclaimed Denara. "You're going to have a concert!"

"The Valentine's concert is about to start, tighten up your synapses and give a celebratory appaulse for the Electrets... (formerly known as Kayo's Electrets)!" added Admina as she spread her arm across to the holographic stage...

"In memorial of the missing stulos, Kayo and Kaede, we shall rock this joint with our remaining volunteers, Dane Wyrkes and Dune Buggy...! Also, there shall be new back up vocal singers, Cluthu Palagram and... Vixen Foxtrot?! Whoo-yay..." the lady muttered to herself at the notes the Dean had composed for her.

"Anyway, enjoy the song, which was especially translated from Solunan to English by our special EbilCorp translator systems!" she continued excitedly admist loud cheers from most of the atrios who were watching the special concert... "Rock on girls and guys!" Admina translated for those unfamilar with the Soluna language.

At that moment, the stage lit up with ultra-bright pink spotlights as dark mists cleared, green lasers filled the air and waved around... Figures seemed to rise from the smoky background as though on a floorivator. As it cleared once again, four people dressed in sequins-covered trenchcoats took centre-stage as two of them stepped forwards, the Alvenoses wore shades.

Culthu grasped her microphone along with Vixen as the music surged from the speakers...
The type of music was techno-dance music mixed with intergalatic sounds, which matched to the excitement felt by most of the people and aliens, Vixen strutted down the catwalk and struck a pose as

Culthu started singing clearly. Vixen joined in occasionally adding her own lyrics, as the two Alvenos did the chorus, with their disco funk sounds and teeny-bopping.

"When the sun shines quietly,
What is love to the universe...?
Boys like girls, we wait for the looove!
The jewel of stars, the pearl of the deep,
The rays of the solar sun doth sleeps."

"Do you dare to, do you guys not,
Face the music and then we bop." added the chorus of Dane and Dune over the music.

"Hero's Heart day, pave the way, Soluna city rocks all day!" Vixen cheered onwards, her strident voice gaining its own momentum as Culthu continued throughout the entire song.
"Wow, this song seriously rocks!" Alexander shouted supporting the song as it ended...
Ten minutes later. "Vixen, you did well back there." Devi congratulated his second friend.

"Riiight, gnarly." she responded, "I have to get ready for the game show Eddie's hosting."
"He's going to select three of the top students of Gears to appear on it. Come along too."

"Welcome to Blind-Quest, the gameshow where we show the craziest stulos dates ever! Sponsored by EbilCorp." A familar sounding meglomaniacal cute voice chuckled.

"Hey every alien! I am Squishee the Brain-slug and this is my host, Eddie Pontimech." Eddie's slug introduced. "Today instead of our usual Mecha-fights, we changed the format..."
Ultra-cheesy music started playing as the camera-Xanatolv inched in closer to the gameshow.
"Today we have three ultra special stulos selected from different houses."

"Take a hand to the exquisite Shanti, Misako Irwa, from the forest-planet Nephorin...! Of the Wolf-blade clan, she's chosen from hundreds of possible stulos because of her unique job."

The audience appaulded as the well-known stulos entered the show and sat on the stool as Eddie explained the rules to Misako. "Instead of the mecha battles, you describe what characteristics you want your blind-date to have and the stats-randomiser machine matches your exact description." Eddie explained "Give or take a few dimutive errors."

"Sounds simple..." deduced Mako cheerfully. "Alright. The someone I would like to have a match to, it would have long legs, dark shady eyes and blond hair, along with a no-nonsense attitude..."

"Oooo, seductive." Eddie chuckled, "I bet you would like to roll the stats right?"
She nodded once. "Roll the randomiser!"
Immediately, a lottery machine whirred in the background as suddenly it beeped several times.
"A match! Perfect for you, Misako..." Eddie's voice contained barely contained excitement, "Alright, open the curtains, to reveal her *true love!"*

The blood-red curtains opened to reveal... A female Xanatolv with blond hair and dark furry lanky legs, along with a dark-satin dress reaching towards her ankles...
"Hello, gorgeous." spoke the girl Xanatolv sultrily, "I assume you're my new date, hunky?
I'm miss Paula Yeklnos, formerly a Mecha-Lecka High School stulos, now in Howl's Angels..."
The female wolf-lady growled hunkily, assuming her new date was an Alvenos...
Misako could hardly believe her blind-date... (don't laugh, this actually happened in MQ.)

This was unbelievable! The stulos sank back in her stool as her new date approached her.
"Wace?!" Misako protested in total surprise as everyone in studio laughed at her reaction...
"Is this date rigged or something?" The Xanatolv grinned as she dropped her bouquet of dark crimson flowers in front of the police-stulos. "I see you're not a true Xanatolv, hunky Alvenos... The produces said they would find matches for me on show..." commented Paula as she bared her long teeth at the green-haired girl. "But that's nothing, a little *love-bite* can fix the problem."

Privately, Misako had a rather low opinion of Xanatolvs, ever since she and her friends ended up in Battleon in the future (a few months ago), but she kept the opinion to herself.
"See you on the date, t-then P-Paula." she managed to stutter as Paula battered her eyes.
"I don't mind if you're late, once a date always a date." Paula howled as she left the stage...
Oh no, what did I land myself into? wondered Misako. Clearly, she wasn't a male stulos.

"Next we have the ravishing Devi Whirl, a Mystraven Martian from the sector known as the Earth's solar-system! And blind-date ladieeees, he's free for the taking. Mmm, hosts."
"Hello, a whole galaxy of Oeyken!" beamed a suave Devi as he settled down for his contest.
Eddie grinned widely as he questioned the detective, "Now, describe your blind-date."

"Well, it must submit to authority, be at my heels at all time (unlike some people I know) and have a great love of PIZZA...!" Devi immediately started, rushing in his attempt to describe it.
"Are you affirmative that's your answer, detective?" said smaltzy Eddie as Devi the detective vorcariously nodded twice. "Well then, open the curtains." The host-slug Squishee ordered.
Hopefully, his date would be Cluthu, the alvenos had a blissful smile on his face as he waited.
Don't you get tired of saying the same thing over again? Devi thought before he freaked.

"Lorithia! That's my *date??"* screamed poor Devi as a female Shadowscythe hound-mecha leapt through the curtains and pounced on him, panting happily. *"Pizza! Oh, you detective you!"*
"That's a nightmare," chuckled Eddie, "Good luck trying to get your date through the door."
"Yeah right." Devi rolled his eyes as 450 kilos of metallic steel crush his larynx. "Get her off!"
"I expect Pizza, loooots of pizza..." ordered the Shadowscythe as a hungry gleam was seem.
"Alright, tonight I'll take you to Mecharoni," promised Devi real quickly.

He dragged the black mecha out of the studio.

"Finally, we get to our final contestant. Vixen Foxtrot from planet Earth! Why hello there, foxy lady. Rrrr. Quite nice to see you all dressed quite snazzily." exclaimed Eddie, glancing at Vixen's attire. The human Oeyken smiled, "Thanks, Eddie Pontimech and Squishee."
"No problem, Vixen. Now, what would you like for a date?" asked Eddie's slug.

"Someone who is obidient, someone who will attend to my every needs and is familiar..."
The stulos proclaimed with a charming grin. Eddie was riverted. "Open the curtains,"
Immediately someone stepped through the red curtains... Vixen was annoyed. "Dune?"
Dune had a rather blank expression on his face while on top of his haired head, there was a small purple octopus sucking away- a Brainslug. He waved. "I am attended to your needs."
"Oh shoot," the response was as the foxy lady swore on live TV...
"Ooooh," went the alien audience, amazed at the swearing.

"I hope you enjoy your day, foxy creature," Eddie cheerfully said to a dumbstruck Vixen.
"Go to *kelf!"* she yelled at Eddie. "Come on, Dune." she stated energetically.

The next day on the show...

"Well then, that was splendid. Let's see a recorded version of their date. First up is Mako!"

"Misako Irwa, you are gorgeous to me, let's go for a moonlit walk at the awning." Paula insisted to the stulos, who looked really mortified by the whole prospect of the Xanatolv grasping her hands delicately... It looked as though it was raptured by mistaken identify.

"After all, you ARE an Alvenos right?" questioned the female Xuntolv as they strolled, with Misako trailing way behind... Somehow, the male disguise and noble suit she was wearing didn't help things out really, Mako seriously hoped that would put Paula off...
Of course, the stulos wasn't a cross-dresser, but still... the plan wasn't working an inch.

Suddenly, Paula halted and her fur raised in passion, its eyes were glinting like jewels.
"I can't stand it any longer, Misako. You are truly an egima, but to me you are striking.
It must be the full-moon fever and wolf-hormones conbined, but I feel horny for you!"
At this statement Misako turned around, embarrased by the whole situation. "I'm not-"
The Xanatolv interrupted, embracing the lunar light which shone bright. "Let's mate."

She licked Mako's nose, "Lick me dearest and true love. For I am enamored by your looks!" Paula laughed and growled lustfully, "After this date, we'll have a nice night 'in heat' -"
"In heat? Arrrgh." Misako exclaimed, "I'm sorry, I decline." she blushed light pink...
"Stop it, Paula, you're taking things too far." In the silvery moonlight, tin shone bright.
Paula moved in to start to gnaw her neck, but just then the stulos jumped away in terror. "I'm not a male,"
The green-haired stulos pointed out, "I used to be a Xanatolv, but cured."

"All the better to gnaw you then," sighed Paula. "I don't mind who I mate with. You're cute."
"Cute as in extremely cute...?" Misako shook her head rigidly. "You're mistaken."
At once, Paula screamed in shock, something was burning her fur. It was a tin amulet around Misako's neck and it stung like red hot iron poker. "Misako, dear!"

The blond girl-Xanatolv reached out for the elusive girl, but she teleported somewhere.
"Don't you 'dear Misako' me, Xanatolv. I've got a weapon and I'm not afraid to use it."
There was a flash of lightning and Paula was alone in the pouring rain. "Nooooo!"
"Get yourself another date!" yelled Misako "Preferably one who is a male person."
"Just you wait mischevious Misako, I won't give up until I make you one of my own!"

Eddie appauled "That was entertaining, now wasn't that?! Heh, even someone like Devi..."
Everyone in Mecharoni stared, even Maza stared as a huge machine-like hound loped into the restaurant, followed by the Slueth. "Table for two please, with a menu special..."
"That's one big girlfriend you have," pointed out Maza, "She's... Effeminine."
"So do you have the Dragon-lord Deluxe along with Pepperoni and Vegetarian?" Devi demanded desperately. "I only have 1000 credits."

Maza nodded as the Shadowscythe chowed down on the still hot pizza. "Yowzer!"
"What do you do in your spare time?" Devi asked miss Shadowscythe...
Only sound of eating continued. He groaned.
"Okay, so where do you romance on a night like this?"
Munch, chomp as the Mecha chowed another piece of Pizza.

It snatched the remaining pizza out of Devi's hands, "Time for another go?"
"Yeah, you do realise I have to foot the bill right?" Devi spoke 20 minutes later.
"We're out of Pizza base!" hollered Maza as she lugged a box of imported pies.

"Oh no. This is going to cost me a fortune," Devi realised as Maza produced the bill.
"Happy valentines day." Maza congratulated. At this Devi fainted in total shock.

Eddie laughed loudly on live TV at Devi's own expense. "Oh well, lastly we cross to Vixen."
"What do you mean you rejected me?" screamed Dune on live stage. "Oh the humility...!"
"You're everything an Oeyken could want: Handsome features, great voice and biceps..."
Vixen stated coldly, "But without your slug in control, you're lousy, rude and obnoxious to others who are inferior to yourself...! I'm splitting up with you." She ran from the studio crying.
"Oh dear, poor Vixen Foxtrot." commented Alexander.

Outside the studio:
"I never want to see that Dune again." sobbed Vixen, "I miss Kayo Regalis, my one and only idol singer, and he's not coming back." Holding back her spilling tears (which were threatening to spill over), she composed a short C-Mail dedicated to Kayo on the Soluna Newsboard screen...

Dearest missing Kayo Regalis. If you're reading this that means that you actually care about what I think and my opinions about you... Well, here goes nothing. Ever since I set my eyes on you while you were singing during auditions, I actually cared about you...

You, Kayo, was an amazing singer, and Kaede included, but you spurned my advances each time during classes and shunned me from your presence which was soooo passionate...
When I heard you were missing from Dean Warlic, I thought my heart would truly break in half, and my personality along with it. For it was I who had gone away while the incident happened, and I could have bore witness for you.. But I was a foolish cad, I believed <u>his</u> lie.

After that time, it was like I had nothing to live for, but if you read this, I will have something to live for, a shining hope in a starry sea of darkness. I wish you a thousand happinesses. I'm going to mourn for you once and no more, casting my thoughts away. This I shall do tommorow. If you returned to me tommorow, I shall wait near the hospital, waiting for you to meet and grasp me in your arms. I do not care what form you take, as long as you come.
With boundless hope,
Vixen Foxtrot of Runehawk house.

Exiting the program, Vixen shut down the email and ran to her Dorm... But someone saw...
"Hmm, Vixen Foxtrot," commented Harlin from the shadows. "I shall wait for your Quo."

Chapter 12: Descents

Authors Notes: Yatta! (lol) Oh hello! Back again I see? I have some really exciting news.
Recentally I was doing DF Sandsea quests with my character Olapen, she became a ranger?!
Now that's cool, XD... I just love bows and arrows (Robina Hood anyone??)
Nee'ways, I have some plot twists in store for you readers! (muhahaha,)

Xenolord, thanks for reading my ficlet :) I spoofed some movie references here.
This is going to be rated higher in the future, because of the... criminals and other themes.
XD - I can just imagine it now: 'Officer Misako, rated PG13 for themes' (oh boy)

Anyway, in regards to the Officer Misako storyline, this happens (deep breath)...
A few months after 'The Rogue, Slayer and Mage' and before 'A Rogue's Tale' by Blade100
(but technically after chapter 7)... And Olapen of this fanfic is Olapen *Jinitro*... (not Jintas)

I hoped to explain why Olapen of 'A Rogue's Tale' got levitating powers, so this is my version of Olapen,
(secretly, I think she *would* make a pretty good villian, no? crowd boos)
After the reset, she changed into Olapen Jintas and you know the rest. Anyway, enjoy!

"Kayo Regalis," Vixen sighed absentmindedly, smoothing down her sea-blue satin dress.

The twilight wind gushed around. It seemed as a buffer against the uncertainy of the mind...
"How I adore his singular name, so masculine and yet so unique..." she continued.
The only light was from the neon-bright hospital's sign...

It was a dark and glaring crimson cross upon the Dakittu of this forsaken night...
Or at least that's what Vixen assumed, she felt simply terrible for not telling her friends about her overeager plans... But if Kayo arrived, and at this tears came, everything would be worth it.
Everything. The human repeated to herself, determined not to let the thoughts go unseen.
A noise rustled as footsteps pattered closer, Vixen turned around resolutely. "Kayo? It is I."

Unfortunately, it wasn't who she expected. "Hello, foxy Oeyken."
A menacing yet youthful voice resounded out of the Dakittu... The Alvenos's speech was both dignified and polite yet there was a certain menace underlining the words as he spoke...
"Fancy meeting you here." the figure laughed, spreading his arms in black-humor.
A boy stepped out of the shadows, his eyes glinting with glee as he grabbed Vixen's hand...
"Vixen Foxtrot, my - what a lovely name." He smiled, but it was sort of spiteful.

Vixen's throat clutched as she realised what happened. "Stryker!" she whimpered.
"No, Harlin." the teenage Alvenos snarled, "You are very naive, just like the others..."
Vixen stepped away, trying to struggle from the male stulos. "Get away," she threatened.
"Oh, but I won't," Harlin chuckled, "You're all *mine* for the time-being." Vixen gulped.

Misako was as usual patroling the lonely and dark streets of Soluna neighbourhoods...
A cold wind picked up and tosssed metal fragments around... It was so desolate after Hero's Heart day celebrations had officially finished. she shivered and glanced around warily...

Light shone from a comforting source, the only light available as steep houses looked down...
Was evil continuing to hide outside the streets, lurking in the dustance?

Seriously, the night was darkening and it held many secrets for criminal activities, however no matter how eerie it was, she still had to do her numerous tasks. Misako was supposed to be looking out for burgulars roaming around the houses, but so far none of them was found...

Breathing a sigh of relief - for a moment there she was worried one of them would pop up and snipe her. That was not a great thought, netherless the saddening memories kept flooding back...

At least she could tell Duncan that there was no reports of criminal activities, and hopefully he would believe her, wouldn't he...? Misako dreaded the Cheif's wrath, but the Shanti remembered that her pepertator had to be found before the Alvenos had a chance to attack...
Nostagalia filled her bitter face, it just wasn't right that he should remain free and about...

Touching her scar, righteous wrath filled her like licking flames, consuming her...
It healed over last couple of months as promised, but nothing could replace her appearance.
It was a brand, a burning mark that showed her as a true outcast, Kayo was right all along.
Tears welled in her eyes, but she still didn't cry because it wouldn't be appropiate at this...

Recalled the details of his face: Had ginger hair, of teenage appearance, insultive of Oeykens...
Just the exact details Misako was looking for, but she was so far from the truth - and time was 'running out' for her - as Kayo had so harshly put it... Then she realised, it *was* the truth:
What if the stranger arrived at the Uni...? Misako rethoricased, shadowy eyes widening.

It was if time had stopped for the teenage officer, the ground swayed below her feet as the mysterious truth rang as clear as a bell in her mind. "Of course," she spoke as if in a dream.
"Why didn't I realise it sooner? I'm so foolish," Misako reprimanded herself in pathos.

Suddenly, there was a roar of mechanical thunder as some *thing* shifted in the bushes.
The Oeyeken was extremely frightened of disruptive noises, thundering as it came...
It was if someone had banged one of those fireworks right next to her.

"Wace?" she shouted as she saw several red and white hover-cycles stacked besides one-another but no owners were present and they had no license plates emblazoned on the backseats...
This situation was just getting weirder and weirder.
Misako concluded as she approached the bikes casually.

Ferocious barks sounded and the officer leapt back as a furry humaniod face puckered its lips: "Hey!" it howled, "Can't we get moving, officer?" The wolf revealed its black gums, "Move."
"We've been watching from the bushes all along," sneered another tough voice, "Owwll...!"

"So the rumours of a Xanatolv biker gang *are* true," Misako shouted, dumbstruck by the revelation. The Alpha-leader laughed as his cohorts howled loudly with amusement.

"Does anyone smell bacon?!" snarled Johnny, Beta Xanatolv, dark shaggy hair had covered his ears as he recognised the new scent, "Don't know what you're talking about, Oeyken..."

"Oeyken let me tell you this- No such stuff as a WOLF-GANG!" Ricky shouted.
Misako paused in thought as she knew the voice which talked, it sounded the same.

"Save that for judge-robot, 'cause I'll bring all of your rowdy Xanotolvs home *on a leash."*
"did you hear me?" The female officer threatened... Johnny had turned to Misako's insult, his furry face twisted in apparent rage. Misako responded with a energy weapon.

"You, pipsqueaks Oeyken? *She's* worthy to be dog-food!" Johnny roared, his long face snide.
"Look at her scarred face, she looks hideous. Plus she insulted my cousin, Paula!"
If he wasn't a Xanatolv, she would've either slapped him or arrested him for his impoliteness, but he quickly backed away.

"This coward's no threat to our chain gang! Roll on, top-dogs!" howled Ricky as Paula scowled distastefully at the female officer: "I swear, if I wasn't in the prescene of my growling cousin here, Johnny Lutz, then I would have done something *much* worse for your prank at our date..."
"Such as clawing your face to pieces, oh well, there's no time for that..."

Johnny looked startled as he realised what Paula had revealed. "Paula! You whelp!"
The Beta Xanatolv immediately revved up the engine with Paula hanging on. "See ya!"
"Hey, come back here." demanded Misako crossly, waving two shiny handcuffs...

"I haven't finished arresting yet!" No reply. "Oh dear, it seems I lost them," she muttered desolately, giving up the chase. What was the use? Still no clues after a full hour...
"I might as well give up soon," she concluded, hanging her head. "I'm so hopeless."
Misako absentmindedly kicked a random crushed recycling bin spilling junk.
A loud crash from behind, the Oeyken turned around and sweat-dropped.
"Great, a dumpster from outside Mecharoni pizza parlour... Wait a minute," she looked again.

There was a discarded telescope with its lens-cover still screwed on, 500 meat pies from an unlabelled food-shop and hard construction hats inside the junkyard dumpster...
And no-one bothered to even think twice. "Wow, there's all sorts of evidence in here...!"

Misako was overjoyed - finally she got some vital clues! But only one question remained:
How was she going to carry all of these collections all the way to her dorm?
As she considered alternative methods, the holomunator beeped: "Miss Irwa!"
"Hello?! Sleuth Zenith? Yes, I found some hardcore evidence near Mecharoni..."
The officer began chatting, but then her eyes diluted in shock... "*Wace*? Vixen's gone?!"

Meanwhile...
Harlin traced the contour down Vixen's jaw-line carefully, eliciting chilling tremors from the human as he eyed her with evocative and inexpressive eyes of firkin delight. First thing on the young girl's mind was to flee him, but something made Vixen pause as Alvenos approached her as a predator downwind of its victim's scent…

"Foxy, *very* foxy lady, you'll do just perfectly." Harlin's voice approved, provoking her into batting his graphite hand off. "Don't struggle my Terra Oeyken," His voice was steady in fervour, as if he was savouring the passionate moment. "Ah, yes." He sighed.

"What do you want, alien Alvenos?" already her voice was frantic, raised to high pitch.

Harlin glanced in deep mirth, "Not an alien from a distant planet, nor am I a pathetic human."
"What I am you'll never find- not in a million years. What I need is simple, yet essential to my species' survival. I'm among the last of my ancient kind, but not final. We take on characteristics of whoever we chose, just by a moment's touch, or two."

The outwardly teenager sighed deeply before flashing a penetrating look at Vixen.

"You're part of Soluna's SPD. I can sense it deep within your inquisitive mind; you're questioning my ulterior motives… For all Vixen knew, you still don't comprehend me."

"Heh, most of you Oeyken are like this before *we* drained them completely. *The fools,"*

"Are you a Shadowscythe?" ventured Vixen timidly, now terrified of weird teen.

Another piercing stare from Harlin, his face turned predatorily towards the girl. "No."

"To me, most Oeyken's supple thoughts are simply prey for my psyche, eternal mists which binds threads of immortality together, requiring me taking more than give." Harlin smiled wickedly, "Of course there are drawbacks; my own Force is limited…"

Laughter, "A naïve Runehawk stulos gave up without much of a struggle, draining mana over an extended period of time while being in the effluent virtual Pandora's maze."

"*Wace?* She's already… dead?" whispered Vixen in horror, Harlin snorted: 'As if! No.'
The otherworldly boy's grip was now tighter, pulling her against his broad shoulder.
"Do you remember?" Harlin continued, suddenly he had the perfect accent. *"Yatta!"*
"Olapen Jinitro!" Vixen gasped, no wonder no one had seen that stulos around.
"Correct, she's extremely amnesiac now, all because I required *Quo* essence..."

"Get off me you creep!" shouted Vixen, panicky now she knew the truth.
"Not so fast," drawled Harlin leisurely, pressing a hard hand against her chest...
"Don't think I *tell* you these things just for you to get away with that illicit info? Or Misako,"
The teenager spat out the name as he swore, his eyes still glowed with hatred.

"*Psi-Lock Quo!"* Vixen gave short cries. In Soluna city, none could hear her screams.
"Good Oeyken," Harlin purred softly, "Your thoughts become as distant mists and events shall be dissipated. Ah, this *Quo* seems to be of great essence," he tittered softly.

"*I can grant something lost to you."* Olapen's eyes snapped open; an incorporable voice was speaking to her in low hushed tones. The sound was treacly like maple syrup…

The voice cackled darkly, *"You can't remember, can't you?"* it taunted at young girl.
Olapen shook her head, "What are you?" she questioned, it returned a haunting laugh.

"*A spectre – Nothing special, I'm a Mecha-poltergeist. Call me Belaya."* It offered.

The Runehawk stulos stared in curiosity. "Belaya? Strange, which can you offer me?"

"*Ability to levitate, power to destroy any opponent, ranged attacks… And dancing,"*

"Irresistible," Olapen considered. "Tempting me with these talents," She added slyly.
Something shifted in the cold background, as though something viable was right there.

"And if I don't accept your so-called offer? Don't know about dancing though,"

The troublesome being caterwauled in reply, *"I can offer you much more than those."*
Belaya finalised, *"These ghost hunters of Johnson can't search forever, I need to hide."*

"Wait, I won't grant you any permission." Olapen's voice sounded insecure, trying to be curled up in a corner. This couldn't be happening, worse than any dreams.

It laughed: Pathetic human, how could she counter its superfluous attacks, compared to say, an experienced poltergeist? Better qualm her now before she suspects its motives.

"*Best place to hide is someone who they won't suspect. I shall infuse with a human. Interesting subject, by the way infusion can allow melding of thoughts and bodies,"*

"You mean *me?* No, no way!" protested the frightened girl, "You cannot, Belaya!"

Olapen's slender hand tightened as the flashing mists surrounding her became opaque.

For a moment, the Runehawk was calm. Could Belaya have decided to leave the room in search for another host? The teenager certainly hoped so, being a mere puppet to the poltergeist *would* be a nightmarish experience; she shuddered at the single thought.

Just then Olapen's eyes spotted that the mists were condensing, becoming more spread out…
At once, the objects in the room started rattling as though unnatural forces were pushing them up into the air. It was getting harder to breathe every second, the mists felt like they were settling around her, the very atmosphere in the room became one of gloom...

It... It was infusing, forcefully binding all of the fragmented memories together...
Oh Lorithia, no! Belaya! She felt like crying out loud, but the eerie mists continued painfully streaming into her very being... It was undeniably overwhelming, she felt a ghost presense in her mind, unleashing all of the *Quo*... Unable to take it anymore, she collasped on the metal floor.

"Mother!" Olapen ran excitedly into the futuristically high-tech office of Jacaranda Jinitro, passing by the latest Soluna Mecha models of the year 2994. Mrs. Jinitro was as always very hectic, holding meetings with other customers... As Jacranda chatted on her holomunitator, she twirled her neon tan hair in habitual fashion, glancing at the electronic device.

Olapen didn't look much like her mother, but they did have similar hairstyles. Whereas Mrs. Junitro wore some metallic badges on her coat, her daughter accesoried with hairclips. However, the teenager's hair-colour was of her father's dark coloured locks, tinted violet.
"Olapen! How's my dear daughter?" she smiled as the teenager Oeyken ran into the office,

"Mother's busy right now, but I can spare a few minutes talking to my special child!"
She hugged the child intimately, "Your father would've been proud of you, if he was here..."
"Mother, have you produced any new models?" asked Olapen eagerly, "Can I see?"

Today was a very special day. "My little Opal, you're so young now, fourteen years of age." Sadness clouded Jacaranda's eyes as she stroked back her daughter's dark hair. Olapen sensed her worriedness and asked what was wrong... "My dear, it is not of your concern,"

Jacaranda eased back in her chair, "It's your birthday soon, hmm. August the 10th."
"Mother, where's Dad?" asked the bright eyed Oeyken, dewy tears glinting...
"Dad said he would be here for me, but where is he?" So many questions...

All those years she had been dreading the questions. Being so young and curious.
"Olapen, I want you to trust me on this." Jacaranda clasped her child's hands.
"I've produced a cobalt Katana Mecha for you, but promise me, no more questions ok?"
"Your father is away on research, but Opal... He was -" The word stuck.
Jacaranda couldn't bear to say it out aloud... How could she explain to Olapen?

For a few moments Olapen was silent, observing her mother's reaction...
She was so excited about her present, in a curious way. An urge to say 'Yatta,' but the look her mother gave was suddenly solemn, so she didn't... "I love you mother." she said quietly.

"Thanks for the present," Jacaranda smiled, it made her happy to see Olapen act that way...

"Is Vixen okay?!" demanded Devi, bursting through the WR room of General hospital...
Helia was as usual detached from her surroundings, for a moment it seemed as if time stopped.
"I don't know," simplified Helia, "She's being out of it for awhile, I'm really certain."
"What the heck is that supposed to mean?" Misako murmured, confused about events.
"Just wait till she recovers enough okay?" The sleuth was desperately trying to explain...
"Vixen's had a traumatic experience with any Alvenos- but won't tell us who it is..."
Devi hissed at the female officer, annoyed at her density... (lol)
"Nnnngh." A soft voice was frail and weakened, the two friends were startled: *"Wace?!"*

Devi fell down anime style as Misako got up, rather angry at his clumsiness: "Devi, stop!"
"Sorry, I am sorry," Devi apologised profusely, knocking into Nurse Helia. "Sorry!"
"hmmph..." Helia huffed in fustration, "Now, I hope your *friend* is going to tell us..."
"Like Vixen'll ever be awake long enough to tell us?" Devi snapped at Helia.

Vixen opened her eyes, everything was really blurry and her head ached like crazy.
"Misako, boy am I glad to see you here." smiled Vixen, "I was having this really bizzare dream, and you were there," she pointed at her friend, "And Nurse Helia, and this strange Alvenos..."
"Can you tell us the offender's name?" persisted Sleuth Zenith, arriving at the dramatic scene.
"Sure I can," continued Vixen wanely, "His name was..." Zenith nodded, taking down notes.

Suddenly Vixen froze. "He's in this room!" she yelled, pointing a shaking finger at the only other male.
Misako was shocked beyond belief, everyone was. "Devi Whirl assaulted me."

"WACE?!" Devi screamed in disbelief so loudly, it hurt every person's ears and glass broke...
"How could I have done the deed to poor Vixen, I wasn't present at the scene of the crime...!"
He begged the other officers, "Please don't arrest me, I am innocent till proven guilty."

Misako was silent, it was a weird twist alright, everything was sure weird tonight...
She glanced at Devi, his usually humorous face was in silent emotion...
For a moment, it looked like he was going to explode in anger at Vixen.
The Oeyken desperately hoped that her partner wouldn't crack under pressure...
(Now *that* would be too awful to behold, she privately thought)...

"Devi, are you ok?" Devi's hands shook with both fear and weariness at the accusation...
"That's a lie," he gritted, blood rushing through his ears... "Vixen..." he sobbed.

Chapter 13: Competitions

Officer Misako
Chapter 13: Cut-throat Competition (AKA: Duel for the Win)

Note: Larosin the warror is my character from DF. I added the 'Ayanami' reference for ALLL you Evangelion fans out there.
Originally I was going to have Diaglo fight Misako right after Vixen fought, but I realised that would be simply tooo long...!
So I just had Diaglo help out. I'm so sorry if the chapter ends up a little choppy halfway through, I'm still not used to the 'new document' format... Any more suggestions for future chapters? Any requests? Send them in, I would love to hear them...! There's no translation for the words in this chapter... Neething else? Oh yes, review my precious fans. :) :D

PS: Oh yeah... Any good names for Misako's brother? Anything except names starting with L or M...!
I think I used almost all of the alphabet to name everyone in this fanfic... (did I just say that out loud?) looks at stunned characters

Misako: So that means we're entirely non-fictional in this context.
Author: ... no, technically... (sweatdrops)
Devi: (Ebil smile) Well, since she is in OUR dimension at the moment, why not deal with her?
Larosin: (very twisted smile) I've been wanting to do this for a... very long time, since Dragonfable.
Olapen: (looks furiously) I did not like the way she treated me during this entire saga.
(scoffs) Ghost possession, indeed.
Every character: GET THE AUTHOR!
Author: EEeeeep! runs away Happy April fools!

"Ayah," exclaimed Vixen as she rubbed her arm during the lesson, "Did we all have to do this Force thing so hard?"
Gripping her weapon, she tried to focus just like Master Tsuba told her.
"All the Wolfblade and Mystraven stulos have trained extremely hard this term, it's time we start looking at advanced artistic techniques of utilizing the Force," complimented Tsuba as the old man clapped in the heat of the battles, everyone stopped what they were practicing...

The stulos dropped their weapons in response to the Master's speech.
Their energy axes clattered to the floor as they each looked auspiciously at the energy blade master...
"Well, I'm not teaming up with her," Devi facefaulted, he was looking in the direction of his friend in sharp distaste.
She likewise glared at the detective at that wayside comment.
How could that person be so blaise towards her?

Everyone in the dojo was confused at how insentitive the Martin acted towards Vixen, wondering how the Oeyken would react to him, even Master Tsuba seemed interested in their little spate. As usual Vixen seemed to be put-off by the response which Devi gave... "I'm not affirming that insult, Deeta." the young lady retorted defensively. She was putting up a facade which unfortunately Devi saw through. His copper coloured eyes narrowed in surprise...

"Deeta," Tsuba interrupted patiently, "Perhaps you could cast your mind to other important matters."
"I won't do that," Devi scowled; his seething anger at Vixen seemed explosive... "You-"

The elder shook his head in dismay at the determination the Alvenos showed in thwarting him.
The stulos these days are getting rather stubborn. Elder Tsuba decided to himself.
The old master shot a glance at Vixen at once as the other stulos ignored them again...

"Ah, that's better." Tsuba sighed, rather contented at the Dardeni that he had just cast over most of the stulos in the training room. His legs creaked with rheumatism as the man stood up… Mako looked around the room cautiously, this was the first time she ever experienced Tsuba's Force-field - rather disturbing experience after realizing everyone else was ignoring them.

Seeing Vixen standing there looking kinda awkward made her realize that something was wrong. "Tsuba," Mako splurted out, "Is anything wrong with the Force?" He shook his head somewhat wisely. "No, I just wanted to assess your friend for a minute." The master raised his palm upwards, "Grasp my meaning." he commanded as the stulos did so... He was right.
"Vixen," Misako started questioning, "Are you sure no one tampered with your Quo?"

The aura flickering around her friend was dark celadon, so naturally Mako was concerned.
"Of course not," Vixen stated tiredly, "I would have known if there was a big blank."
Tsuba looked incredulous. "Not to mention, your complexion is anemic at the moment..."
"Are you sure you want to continue to the next level of your training?" The ancient man continued speaking calmly.
The Oeyken nodded. "Then let it be as you said, Vixen Foxtrot."

"Wait," stated Mako, stepping forwards, "If we continue progressing towards finishing this class..."
"does this mean harnessing the Force will require more focus and agility...?"
"You yourself should know stulos Mako. Shanti of your disposition are naturals at this type of energy-blade training and sensing auras of people. It's what kind of Force you harness which actually matters..." Tsuba said.
"Everyone's Force is unique..."
"So how can we tell what Force we have?" Vixen replied. He chuckled.
"Vincor, that's for us to find out today. Everyone must face their opponents sometime."
"Sometime?" questioned Vincor, just as the Force faded and everyone looked around...

"- old fossil...!" Devi exploded in mid-sentence before he realized he was unpaused.
"Wace, this dojo is just too whacked out," muttered another stulos as Tsuba nodded...
The old man selected a random stulos from the group as she nodded eagerly.
The energy saber was ready with a flick of the wrist.

"Miss Quyrso, your opponent is Vincor Foxtrot." The master added in amusement.
Vixen's mouth gaped open in surprise. "Quentin?!" she responded as said rival gave an extremely cheeky wink...
"I'm never afraid to fight dirty," the brash tomboy from Alexander's dorm announced loudly...
"Though today seems to be my lucky day! Hehe..."
The opponent glanced at Vincor with an ambitious expression, her weapon at the ready.
"Let's spar!" Quyrso challenged deftly, "It's now or never...!" Vixen looked scorned.

"I shall accept your challenge," the flame-haired Oeyken decreed, steadying her aim.
"Brave words indeed," scoffed Quyrso, as she ran a hand through her vanilla-hued hair.
The crowd in the dojo gasped softly at the threat as the two tomboys circled each other.
They weren't ever letting their vision stray far from their targets...
There was definite tension building up - the calm before the storm, lapping waves before the raging whirlpool.

"Now this duel's getting interesting!" commented a random stulos, his eyes glinting...
"Siletius, Vincor!" A command was thrown across the room as Quyrso launched herself.
Her bladed sword sizzled through the air, particles dazzling those who watched in awe...
The rivaled stulos was as a natural gymnast, performing arts beyond human capability.
It was if Quyrso's movement was otherworldly and preened to perfection...

Vincor couldn't help but stare in awe, but then a sound alerted her: *SHIIIRRRRING!*
"Dodge and defend!" Quyrso taunted Vincor, the brash Oeyken landed gracefully on two tiptoes, seemingly inhuman...
"Or aren't you as perceptive as I thought, Vincor?!" The sound carried through the dojo-room; even Moglin Twang heard it all.
"The *Shigu* of your training, a marksman of fencing! I bet even Deeta can't defeat me!" she bragged.

"I concur," Vixen snarled through Quentin's dares, fresh as they came... Another movement to the left announced Vincor's defense, it caught Quentin by surprise as her opponent quickly bruised her chin, moving closer for the aim...
The blow fromVincor's resulting Force became so powerful that Quyrso was thrown across dojo before crashing into the floor with a loud shatter. There was a shocked silence as matos Tsuba realized what had taken place.
"Vincor, you've been very hostile." Devi was awed and stunned.

Quyrso wiped her smeared chin with the back of her hand. there was an injury which was still trickling from sudden impact with the floor. The rival sheathed her sword vehemently, as with rage...
"Not bad," The tomboy grinned rather ironically, impressed with the unpredicted move...
"I wasn't expecting such vigour from a feisty rival, Vincor you're a worthy opponent!"
If looks could kill, Quentin was now looking rather venomously at Vincor's defense...
"I would have given you 10 points for your creativity," continued Tsuba unhelpfully.
"What about artistic merits!" responded Quentin; she was eyeing Vincor with a raw hardened expression.
"I call this Force ability, *Accelerated Turbo Dart!"* Quyrso declared as her form glowed suddenly.

Immediately, several things happened, firstly Quyrso's form started to blur as she enhanced her Force...
One second she was there, the next second; there was a sudden burst of speed from the rival.
It was as if Quyrso had unleashed an inner power.

Vincor's eyes widened, Quentin was *way* too quick! The other Oeyken moved in for the strike, the air was spinning around like there was a tornado... One moment later there was a timed sound which reverberated through the air.
Instantly, Quyrso stopped in middle of her action, panting as she looked approvingly at Tsuba and glared at Vixen.
"Well?" Quentin demanded, "Your move, your turn to go. I anticipate your Force...!"

Vincor's eyes flashed a startling indigo as her opponent tensed up, bracing for the impact... But it was shocking.
The command of the Force was unspoken, yet everyone saw what happened... It happened almost immediately.

Time seemed to slow down almost evocabily, the other stulos stared at how Vincor seemed to handle the very fabric of space-time... It was as if the situation was an induced state of illusions, Misako noticed.
Suddenly there was a rewinding.
"Wace!" screamed Quyrso as Vincor used the chrono-changing power to her advantage...

There was a flash. Instantly Quyrso found herself being teleported back to the part where she bragged...

But with a major big difference: someone was now teaming up with Vixen...
"This isn't fair! Vincor's cheating!" Quentin yelled profusely.
The rival was pointing the finger at Vincor with a shaking hand, likewise Tsuba looked confused.
"Didn't the old fossil say that we could have partners in this duel?" Vincor nodded as she approached her rival...
"NOOOOO-!" Quentin realised as the two stulos prepared to spar with her -
Let's just say this second duel just didn't end well for poor Quentin.

After class, the Alvenos were talking about the new D.F.A. movie... They were joking and generally imitating their favourite movie characters from that movie. One of the boys, Dune was tossing out catchphrases faster than a machine gun.
"Didja see that commander? He looked 'phat' cool!" Mithlos laughed to the other males. "I love the random jokes they used in that movie! And Ballyhoo's comments. ROFL!"
"Yah," chuckled Kaiser, "Did you see that monster! Awesome movie, and those Star-captain mechaz!" he started drooling.
"I beat up a green Hulkin' bunny today. Did ya all do the Easter hunt?!" demanded an Alvenos wearing totally black clothes and a white Zorro-like mask, he looked familar and he was carrying an Eye-pod with his fingers touching the screen.
"Naaah. Couldn't bother, neeways. Toooo haaard." shrugged Dane as he adjusted his glassy-visor on his silvery-haired head... The rest of the stulos cheered in unison as they joked, giving each other high-sixes with their palms.
"I don't like crackin' codes, *'Holy fudge-moracket'!"* admitted Alexander, pretending to be one of the movie characters who got knocked on the head...

Every Alvenos in the boy-group laughed, even the new stulos who were punching each other playfully...
"Lookies!" yelled one of them, passing a glance at the corridor ahead of them, "It is that scarred Oeyken from that weapons classroom before!"
At this, the entire group fell anime-style. "Oooooo," They whooed, "You're in for it!" There was loud roars of laughter as the Alvenos laughed at their own jokes. "Rookie, here comes Soluna's own Ayanami!"

At this comment, Mako got really cross at the obscure anime reference...
"What are you guys implying?" she questioned the first speaker, "I'm not a fictional character from one of those anime."
"Haha, great joke!" Dane cheered, "I betcha do a great imitation of those (censored) gals!"
She stared at him in distaste before putting out her own question...

"Oh yes." Misako stated observantly, "Do any of you know anything about a guy with ginger hair?" They glared at her.
"None of us have ginger hair!" yelled Dune, tossing a can at her. "Why the questions?! WHY?" Misako sighed...
"Actually," One of new guys spoke up, "Can I speak to you in private. I overheard a conversation the other day, I didn't know what they were talking about."
"OOOOOOOOO!" The Alvenos group whooed, the new Alvenos face-faulted... "You got a crush on her!" they chanted with renewed frevor, Diaglo waved them away with movement from his clawed hands.
"Rjoui Ltanttiyiu Nae." Diaglo stated in a foreign accent, totally embarassed. Now it was Misako's turn to blush cherry red...
It was then that she noticed that stulos had gleaming flinty eyes and patches of molten-red scales as well as a long serpentine tail... Clearly he wasn't originally from Soluna City, but he must have been from the 'restaurant on other side of galaxy'. (lol)

"Alright, Alvenos." Misako consented with a beguiling smile, "You can assist me later with that info."

Much much, much later...
"So, Diaglo..." The Oeyken questioned the strange stulos outside one of the Mecha-training classrooms. "You overheard an ongoing conversation about the stulos incidents earlier today..."
"Yeah, that's right *Rjeyai*." Diaglo had a very thick accent which sounded akward compared to Soluna language.
The alien stulos nonlachantly ran a preened claw through his glossy auberguine hair, he seemed very anxious for an unspoken reason, like he was desperate to tell her about what he had heard earlier.
"The other day, I heard two people talking during breaks. Hypothetically speaking, *heorki*, they mightn't have seen me at all."
"Go on," Misako silently urged him to keep on talking, anything that would diverge a clue to those confusing mysteries...
"One person explained a construction site and an urban address. Other person nodding and mentioned missing stulos."

"They were exchanging information? But for what? And did you glance their hair colour?" Misako demanded. Diaglo smirked.
"Not exactly, but they near *katachii* me sneaking out." His look was intense. "I think our Uni have a hidden informant sending out information according to them. They metioned two locations in particular... '1997 Falconreach Avenue' and something called 'Tek's Mecha and the broken-down Floorivator... I have no idea what thet were talking about." he admitted very sheepishly.

"An informant." repeated Misako clearly, no wonder the sudden attacks on stulos during those former months. Those attacks was all planned, every single one of them. Even the virtual maze computer-hacks and the robbery. Nothing was left to chance, those events were all connected to a master-plan... It made sense for once, but just who was acting behind all that info?
"Diaglo, I think I have a vague idea who the perpetrator was." she began. "But first I need your wilfull co-operation..."
"Anything for a *Rjeyai."* Diaglo nodded, splinters of his ruby eyes gleaming once again as fire, "I'll enjoy this." Misako had a rueful expression briefly, maybe some of those Alvenos wasn't so bad after all... even if he was a little *too* perfect for her own taste.

"Alright ya *Rotrair!*"Stryker bellowed at a cowering stulos. "I am gonna strike ya to the sun and back! What's the matter, ya pansy? That's right, you forgot to remind me of those pathetic Kurowasa mecha that you owe! Oh yeah, that'll really go on -"
He stopped yelling at the small male stulos as he saw the two figures from the other side of the classroom.
"Stryker! Drop that poor stulos, you don't have the run of the place." Misako ordered, Stryker shook his head in absolute glee...
The trashy Wolfblade stulos had a smug smile before realising that fierce Diaglo was on the Oeyken's side for once, he froze.
"Oh, ya *Irijairk!*" Stryker snarled as Diaglo struck him once for his insult, which thankfully wasn't translated... The Alvenos now sprawled from the hit, falling... Now Misako realised that this stulos had c*innamon locks.* Not that shiny ginger hair she had sought for. She was slightly disappointed

"Why did you betray your House? Why did you inform them?" Diaglo demanded, pinning Stryker against the wall in his rage. For a moment, the stulos struggled to form words. *"I did it for the credits alright?!"* He pratically whispered. "I was dirt poor. I had no money to pay off Gear Uni fees. I was hopeless at my jobs and had to steal. Credits makes the universe go 'round..."
"Yeah, but no excuse to go round handing those information to criminal corporations." protested Misako, remembering the scar she was given a few months earlier... Stryker scoffed haughtily as if in unbelief at her comment.
"So what?! I did what I haffa do! *They* offered me everything on a gilded platter...! Even my Credit troubles were over. Look 2, 000 credits per week was a lotta creds. I might have bought a Star-Captain membership

voucher from the stores next door...!" Stryker scoffed. "Ya pansy." At this Diaglo released him and Stryker landed, before rubbing his sore head indigantly.
"You know about Falconreach Avenue then...!" Misako pressed on. At this single statement the Alvenos stiffened in horror...
"Yeah, how was I to know about their plans for those people?" That was when she knew the truth.
"Aha, so you do know about the missing stulos!" she smiled ironically ('Oh Kelf.' Stryker muttered.)

"So I assume you're now supervising this unit?" Duncan asked. The Superintendent nodded sarcastically.
"It's my duty. You think this will work." A tall super-model teenage with a scandalous apperance was seated... She had shoulder length dark-chocolately hair with a hint of orange, was wearing an iconic winged head-band which looked unique, along with lots of makeup and red lipstick she applied over the years.

"Positively. Larosin, welcome to our SPD team. I just hope our detectives and police won't react to the news of your arrival. It might be a shock to those aliens working here that you're now in charge of the station these next few months."
"Obliged." The Superintendent smiled vapidly, the smile seemed to play on her lips darkly.

Chapter 14: Discovery of Amoresi

Officer Misako: Case of Amoresi -
Chapter 14: 'Discovery of Dakittu'

Author's Note: Firstly, please read and review as always. :) I love reviews from my readers... This saga will be getting mega serious now! Let the tragedy arc begin! muhaha... Secondly, Larosin from Dragonfable is introduced as a rather agonising character (it's not as you think) Can Misako figure out who's behind the attacks before it's all too late and all is for naught? Does anyone like Larosin's personality so far?? Thirdly, I can't honestly think of a good enough name for Misako's brother, so I suggest everyone send in some offers. XD
Finally, thanks for all the reviews.

During their classes, it seemed as if Vixen and Devi weren't as close as before...
It was as if an icy wall had built up around them and was threatening to corrode in moments…
They hardly talked to each other, Misako noticed, their expressions were equally furious, glancig at each other.
The two didn't even compliment each other during the Mecha-battling classes with Miss Denara - where the main aim was to be polite after each battling session with their mechas, they only looked the other way in scorn...

Misako now wondered how long this tiff was going to last for...
Their silence towards each other had already lasted three weeks and counting onwards...
It was not like both of her two friends to argue for such an intense period of time...
The two usually resolved their frequent quarrels a few days afterwards, but this was unusual even for them.

Then the inevitable happened during a break in the schedule, both Devi and Vixen were in the dorms...
When one of them spoke very loudly towards the other person.
"You fox, how dare you indicted of assault." Devi's voice acidic as his face became stoic...
Vixen's face became harsh.
"What did you call me, a sly fox?" The angered ex-friend yelled at Devi, "My memory's not faulty; I distinctly remember your presence. Stay five feet away, you third wheel." The girl pushed him away, roughly handling him, he nearly crashed.

Devi's expression fell; genuinely hurt by her comments, but then his eyes hardened as if trying to disguise his feelings…

"To think we were friends," His voice cracked in emotion, as if he couldn't believe this was happening to him...
"I'm shocked by your claims. Send my apologies. If Misako asks, I'm not working on her case anymore with you around…"
The sleuth's voice rose in silent anger, "I'm going out," he stated moodily, avoiding to look at the Oeyken...
"Fine with me," responded Vixen in her rage, "You'll miss all of your SPD case solving today, I bet you won't care."
"YAWA!" Devi's voice uncharacteristically roared, "I'm not a third wheel, Vixen!"
He fumed, feeling really hot underneath the collar.
It was then that the Alvenos stormed out of the dormitory, slamming the glass door right in Vixen's face.
SLAM...!
The sound carrried through the hallway of the remainer of the Dorms, other aliens opened the doors and

looked outside.
"I bet he did that on purpose," Vixen stated, crossing her arms and looking rather bitter at the argument which ensured.

"One glass of Masala martini please," A gloomy voice spoke at Star-captain's club, as though it was depressed.
"Sleuth, you seem to be underage– you need to be 17 to apply for the tab." The voice issued nearby and giggled.
The waitress pointed out as Devi glared at her nametag, her calm voice sounded distinctly familiar to Devi...
His eyes widened in recognition at the voice which issued, *not her again!*

"Pascha's already working here?" Devi groaned in realisation, his head on the club's aluminium counter...
Instantly her recognisable face appeared, she was still rose-haired and lovely to look at.
"The one and only, dear brother...!" Pascha declared vividly as she grinned, "I'm afraid I have to toss you-"
A voice interrupted as a teenage Star captain stood up: "He's a friend of mine."
The Star-Captain held a license, which Pascha grabbed and gazed at the many details on the card...
Her silvery eyes kept glancing at the tiny writing written on the card.
Pascha murmered to herself constantly about the card's details before handing it back...

At this she now blushed, "Landon Irwa, my mistake. Please take a seat, Sleuth."

This rust-haired Alvenos's most distinctive feature was fairy feelers sticking out of his wavy hair and he wore braces.
He had long youthful hair which hung delicately... He seemed very acknoledging of the Sleuth...
"Hey, little Oeyken, another martini if you please!" The male snapped his nimble fingers, ordered Devi's sister to pour out yet another drink for him, whilst jokingly chatting to her brother...

Approximately thirty minutes later, both Landon and Devi lounged around, chatting as some friends.
"Am I shouting??" yelled Devi apparently drunk from two martinis, he swooned...
Pascha's expression was very disapproving of the Detective: *Brother, what has gotten onto you lately?!*
"I think you had enough drinks, brother." The Oeyken tried to clear away the glasses of champange Landon was hogging.
"I'm known as the black Mecha of Irwa clan," Landon's pale face was flushed,
"My sister's too ashamed of my attitude, plus mother thinks I'm a naughty influence."
Landon winked at the sleuth, "That's why Koko's shy to even mention her ol' bro,"

Devi laughed heartedly, "Good captain, I came to drink away many sorrows."

"Want to sing songs 'bout Mechas?" Landon raised his glass as Pasha knocked it away with her hand sweeping the table.
The glass tinklied on the floor, already shattered before the cut-crystal cup even hit the surface...
"You've had Masala already!" Pasha snapped crossly at Devi, "Two's enough; it isn't healthy for us Martians to scoff alcohol..."
"You even can't handle three, Devi! Listen to your sister." she pleaded.

"Look Paschie- ooh, I'm seeing invisible dragons." Landon laughed as he fainted onto the floor...
Pascha rolled her eyes in annoyance, *This always happens when those Star-captains come into the club...! Every time!*
At once, the large graphical holomuniator on the wall flickered to life and started showing the daily news.
All the Star-captains were glued onto the device as it glowed images of a young lady with brown hair and a perm holding a microphone - and no, it wasn't Sally on the news this time...

"Laura Lensflare, 6 o'clock GEAR news. A new food business had opened up in Soluna, bought by Cain Corporations..."
'Amoresi Pies' reported booming sales from customers. And its top-secret ingredient was protected from the persistent Mecharoni owner, Parma John... On totally unrelated news, SPD has found a vital note from the mysterious ringleader of those crimes:
Who will be next? Time is running out for all of you drastically. *Bye for now but not forever...!"*

"That's it," Pascha gritted her teeth in fustration, "I'm going to tow you all to Gears Uni...!"
The Martin female started dragging the two to their waving feet. she yelled at them to grab onto her shoulders for added support... "But I'm not supposed be in Uni," wailed Misako's brother, "I've finished University remember?"
"Too bad, you're coming with us because of your embarassing behaviour," Pasha pointed out.
Luckily, being of the Martin species, she had enormous strength which were unique to girls -
Even though Pasha didn't appear to have any weight-lifting strength, she still managed to carry them anyway...

"I will send a note to your new supervisor, about you not coming today, due to a hangover," she told Devi...
"Don't do that again...! You are an irresponsible Martin brother, and don't expect me to clean up after yoooou!"
"Don't worry, I won't." promised Devi, his voice was still slurred... "Tommorow I'll have a headache, eh?"
Pascha sighed...

Everyone (Alvenos included) groaned back at the SPD Police station when SHE arrived...
All of the aliens all learnt that a Soluna Superintendent, Miss Larosin Fin-Shcaets, was in charge of the units... while Chief Duncan was away on specific duties... Every Alvenos at the station liked her at first due to Larosin's easy-on-the-eyes appearance and her makeup... All of the Alvenos had agreed she looked simply stunning (anyone wonder why?).

Miss Larosin looked rather out of place supervising in the SPD units, she looked like a supermodel on cat-walks...
Too bad - the new arrival was also tyrannical with her imposing rules and conditions (Larosin wrote herself and stuck on the pin-boards) and the fussy attitude she showed towards the aliens working there. Not only that, she was also punctual about the officers being late and absentees... In short, Larosin made the SPD officers' lives more annoying with her behaviour.

"Where in Soluna is your friend, Masoti!" yelled the Superintendent furiously, slamming her manicured hand onto the desk.
Unfortunately, Devi was noticably absent from the Soluna Police department and Larosin was not in a good mood already...
"Jarek stop slacking off, I can see you slouching from all the way back there! I have eyes at the back of my head - by that I meant metaphorically, not literally..."
Sleuth Zenith rolled his eyes in exasperation at the bossiness the female was showing towards the professionals.

"Rose or however we pronounce your name- I don't think you should order us around like this all the time," stated Misako rather quietly... *I didn't know the new person arriving here today was such a control freak...!*
"My name is Misako Irwa, Masoti is an Alvenos name... Remember that." Larosin glared at the defiant Oeyken.
"Don't call me Rose, ugh." groaned Larosin self-importantly... "And when the Chief's away," she trailed off with a slight smile.
"The snob will play," Misako finished rather insultively. If Larosin heard *that*, then she would definately hit

the roof.
If she did hear, then the Superintendenr was doing a rather good job at not showing any emotion - or at least any *shigu.*
"How about this, Koko," Larosin still had a twisted smile etched on her porcelain pale face...
At this Misako bristled at the sound of her nickname as Larosin laughed.

"I've heard everything that you said about me today..." The Oeyken's eyes widened in shock, *she knows.*
"I shall dock your pay if you continue to talk... incessantly to the other officers in private about moi."
"Miss Larosin, I don't want to protest, but..." Misako stood up to leave, however the supermodel had the look in her eyes- The expression which was enraged and raw with anger. Hastily, she sat down again to avoid the Superintendent's scolding.
Larosin laughed scornfully, checking her shiny hair and leaning on the metallic desk, "Ah, what's with the shocked look?"
CLICK-CLICK. The superintendent tapped on the desk with a long finger and the sound it made was distractive...
"Nothing, I just realised something..." Misako tried to avoid the icy eyes, seeing them made her shiver with dread.

"We all aren't no angels, that's for sure." Larosin continued pompous but grim,
"Everyone redeems themselves but never achieves anything of that much importance."
Misako just wanted to wipe that smug expression off Larosin's face...
That Superintendent sure was very manipulative towards her peers...
"Don't get me wrong, Misako. I've heard about your other... tragic job as well... *Accident* I presume."
Larosin's silky voice was now sardonic and unrelenting and as sharp as the deceit she wove.
Accident? It was a robbery. How dare Larosin twisted the truth around...

"Yes, it was rather *unfortunate* for you, wasn't it Koko...?"
She's as sweet as a rose, but steepled in Dakittu sin...
"It wasn't an accident. Don't say it like that." Misako winced at the word.
"Well then," Larosin said rather brightly, changing the topic too quickly.
"I presume that you have evidence for me?"

"Yes, Larosin." Misako said meekly, Larosin was really getting on her nerves today. but the model wasn't impressed by the evidence presented so far... "By the power of your numb-skull!" proclaimed Larosin loudly. "No fingerprints or DNA evidence?! What did you take me for," she continued.
Larosin sneered scornfully at Misako, "By the looks of it, all of this evidence come from a junk-site..."
"There's nothing here but junk!"
"Correction: the dumpster outside Mecharoni." Misako spoke back as the Superintendent scowled at the response...
"Still, I stand corrected," claimed Larosin off-handedly as she traced each item with a touch of her fingers...
She always had to have the last say. It was then that she turned around suddenly, hardened eyes glinting.
"Jarek!" she called the name sharply...

One of the Forensic-investigators toppled from his seat... Surprisingly enough, a teenager with curls of fur answered her call... "Yes? Miss Fin-Schaets?" Jarek spoke hurriedly, trying to fit in as many words as he could. That was quite a feat, even for the poor alien Alvenos. His voice was very technical and yet jittery - evidentally Jarek had drunk too much caffine before doing his work-shift. Larosin sighed in fustration. She couldn't believe that of all things, the *investigator* was unprepared...
Should remind Jarek that duty calls for the unitiative...!
"You want me to examine these evidence-items?" Jarek asked, before pushing his glasses further inwards.
"Yes, do it before I decide you're not worthy of my comments." proclaimed the Superintendent airily.

Misako cast a long stare at Larosin, "I'm sure Devi has a decent explaination for his absence."
Why did she always forget that this particular Oeyken hated being provoked...?
"Actually, I've done some research on the restaurant of Amoresi..." Jarek said cautiously.
"Give us the short version," Larosin said, glaring at Misako's comment on Devi's absence.
"Amoresi is similar to a Terra word used in Italian phrases light-years time ago." Jarek began.

"It turns out that the owner wanted it to appeal to the masses of Soluna city, so they used a delectable word."
"Go on," Misako was fascinated by that information, it was interesting...
"We also looked at the content of the pies, it seems to be an aphrosidiac." Jarek heistated.
"What's an aphrosidiac," wondered Slueth Zenith, leaning on his desk...
"An aphrosidiac is supposed to be 'the food of love.' -" Jarek stated.
"Lots of foods are supposed to induce love, such as oysters... Alas, Amoresi pies do none of that kinda stuff..."
"Then why do people still buy them?" Misako questioned
"The Placebo effect." the forensic investigator said as if it was blindingly oblivious.
"Translation?" Larosin scowled.
"The pies make all the aliens and humans think they're in love- when it really doesn't!"

Chapter 15: Fractures in the Dawn

"So, what can I do ya for, good customer?" spoke a cheeky voice as the Amoresi customer stared...
He was looking at a teenage alien with shaggy green hair, and this was even stranger - blue skin which seemed to glow. "Come on, *chronos* is passing us by and Amoresi can't wait, not with these bargains!" The customer glared before Rayne started chatting... "Listen, I'm just the store's assistan-"
"Is this Amoresi Pies? And are you the employee?" His annoyance was barely restrained as the alien stared and yelled...
"I'm just the assistant and courier, importing across the galaxy. Yes siree, human, we're always on time!" Rayne ignored him...
"I'm complaining about the qualities of your company's pies!" yelled the customer loud enough for everyone to hear.
"Wace? Oh, you're just joking, surely!" Rayne laughed it off as the customer looked angrily at the alien's misunderstanding.
"Are you unfamiliar with Soluna customs?" the human teenager yelled, "Don't you understand my complaints?!"

"Dakittu mind you have, sure I understand you perfectly!" smiled Rayne peacefully, patting the teen on the rosy cheek, "Let me discuss the matters with my current boss, sir Cain."... Rayne liked annoying the customer, it was so fun to tease them...!
The customer exitted and returned with an avertisement, "There!" the Alvenos stated, "Right there! In advertisement."
"I'm sorry, I can't help you there." Rayne objected. "So how about you just leave the store quietly and not bother us?!"
"Fine, but I want my credits back. All twenty-five credits of my allowance!" bellowed the customer, leaving the store...
Rayne Davies looked at his ill-gotten gains from customers, privately chuckling at his stash of fortunes under the counter.
"Wow, looks like pure credits...!" The alien courier grinned happily, "Now what should I do with these tips... hmmm."
By this rate I'll be able to buy my own energized daggers, oh luuuuucky luuuucky days!

"Wace? You want me to work overtime over these cases?! That's an outrage, Rosia Fin-Schaets!" Devi hissed when he fpimd out what was expected. Larosin huffed in response while glaring at the detective, he had gotten her name wrong again...!
"That's too bad *Devil*, and that rule applies to your Oeyken friends too." Larosin stated obnoxiously, enjoying the poor detective's fuschia face... "And if you don't agree, how about you just check your C-Mail inbox, full...? Chief Duncan will be-"
"Alright, alright, bribery and blackmail... Shimei, is this how you treat all absentees?!" the Martin sleuth yelled.

"Nope, only the <u>unexplained</u> absentees. Next time, say my name *properly...!"* Her cold voice affected Devi so much he looked mortified at Larosin. *She's <u>so hot</u> to look at, but Larosin's so baaaad-mouthed and threatening.* Devi realised...
"Sleuths these day have no spine to speak of... They seem to turn to jelly at my words." the Superintendent said lightly...
"Hey, Larosin, that's insultive." spoke up Zenith as he grabbed a coffee from the coffee-mocha machine.
"Zenith, you dare question my authority?" the supermodel demanded... "Listen you, I'm in charge of this unit for the -"

TOOOT! A deep horn sounded outside. TOOOT-TOOOT! Abrasive noise stopped Larosin's ranting. "Wace was that?!"
A green minivan was parked outside the station, it looked shoddy and broken. Devi's eyes widened. "You got a new car!"
"That's right," Misako's voice sounded out from the minivan. "I got it for a good deal from Eddie, but it was rather pricey...!"
"How much?" Devi retorted, staring at the headlights and Larosin walked outside, inspecting the second hand minivan.
"At least ten-thousand credits." Misako sweatdropped as everyone's jaw hit the ground at the response...
"WACE?!" everyone from the police station yelled, "But you're not a star-Captain yet." Larosin nodded in agreement.

"Percisely, which is why your car is nothing but a shoddy imitation." Larosin said proudly, "way more-"
"Oh shut up your mouth," Jarek scolded Larosin, "I think it looks rather awesome. Did you do a driving test?"
At this, Misako's face showed confusion. "Uhhh... I don't think so. Eddie advised that I shouldn't be driving yet..."
"That's because of your eye isn't it? From the accident," Everyone muttered to themselves at that one rumour, while Devi looked ashen-faced... "Don't worry about them," Detective Devi whispered to Misako, "I'll drive the van if you let me."
"First thing on the adgenda," Larosin sneered at the Martin, "Are you any good at driving?" He turned even redder.
"Not really, although I did a few crash courses." Devi said despondently. Larosin laughed at that response.
"Courses. Pontimech. I'll demonstrate to you what a real vehicle is made of. Devi and Masoti follow me."
"Did you do that on purpose, or did you forgot again." The green-haired oeyken said as they left the police station.

With puzzled expressions, Devi and Misako followed as Larosin lead them to a nearby garage in a littered alley...
It looked empty and worse, desolate. Some alien had scrawled some illegible graffiti on the walls of the garage... The location didn't look fabulous or picey so this confused them even more. Why did Larosin show them this place...?
"This is where I kept my new vehicle." explained Larosin whipping a large, grimy white sheet aside, "Behold!"
It revealed the unexpected: A gleaming new bluish-green helicopter.

"You've got to be kidding," gasped poor Devi as he stared at Larosin's gleaming model. "You've already got one of those-"
"Hovering 'Flibberty-Gibblet' helicopter, a few months ago" finished the superindentent as she pushed back glinting chocolate hair which dazzled in the sunlight, "Heh, latest model off the market. How could I resist...?" She smiled with pride and arrogance, if only the others could see her prized vehicle. Devi's mouth was still open, so she interrupted with a sigh.
Then Larosin changed subject quickly - but she seemed to have planned this ahead, like the topic was already in mind.
"Oh, yes. The current case with the mysterious ringleader... And a note, stating that the SPD had little time left to solve this..."
A dark flicker in her eyes. "We must proceed at once with the matter at hand. Gather your unit..."
"But Larosin." Devi began sweating, "We haven't finished analysing the clues yet, you can't expect us to finish-"
She snapped her fingers lightly, if only for a moment and her expression was stony...

"Never you mind, detective." Larosin grinned devilishly, "Set your piorities straight, you *devil.* Your

crackforce 'unit' shall work alongside my 'guidience'. otherwise, you shall reap the consequences... Of course," Misako stood up to protest against the insults, but then the model made a guesture which signified 'silence'. "Don't interrupt a superintendent, officer."
"As I was stating... Of course some of your unit has already made their choices. Will your special unit oblige?" Devi looked defeated already, he had no choice in the matter. "I agree, Matos." he stated in a strange tone, "The agreement shall be Quetos."

"Good," pronouced Larosin in an accented tone, "So all won't speak against what I order next. From now on Devil, I expect much of you. No more slacking, no more lounging, eyes on the case. As for you," she stared at Misako with a bemused look.
"No complaining, I wouldn't want any tears..." Misako wasn't impressed with the deal - if the superintendent acted this way somehow it repelled her, sheer loudness, the falseness of tone Larosin kept up every day... It was certainly strange.
Why in Soluna did Duncan choose this control-freak to be in charge? Could hardly see the point of that.
"So shall we proceed?" The loudness of the voice echoed in the dakittu alley. "I shall alert the other units of my plan."
"Okay, lead on," Misako stated, not wanting to make the new Oeyken in charge angry, it was scary.
Who knew what Larosin was capable of when she was angry? They exitted the alley, Larosin covering her vehicle again.

"Mmph, mmph," said a muffled voice behind the locked steel door as a man strode in.. Ricky inspected the single door viciously, before it swung open of its own accord. The gangster's beady eyes surveryed the mechanic's shop, scoffing at the metal gears and tools that were used to repair mechanical robots. His sinster smile widened greedily as he stared outside one of the broken windows, watching the Soluna citizens doing their daily lives... *Pitiful aliens, what kind of pathetic lives they lead?*

"Nice shop you have here, miss Tek. I'm sure you keep rapport with your customers, but I've ensured no one comes here to release you, I even locked up the sugar supply so that you can't transform into Hyperion. But of course you can't talk right now- not with that on your mouth. I even did a triple knot. Sure the Marquis can arrange nice situation when he decides what to do."
No harm in talking to the unfortunate Oeyken, he supposed as he considered talking to the mechanic. What could she do? Burst out of her binds in one maneuver? Ricky smirked, seeing as he took every precaution to ensure no escape for poor Tek...

Ricky paused for dramatic effect as he listened for the telltale signs of the police. None coming? Good for business, he decided to carry on for her sake as he roamed around the empty shop... At least no customers arrived for the past couple of months...
"We've been borrowing Floorivator for the meantime, hope the owner don't mind (heh heh)" Ricky snarled gruffly in an almost bestial way as he licked his cowslick hair. "Until then au reviour, bubblegum-haired mechanic...!" The menacing laugh echoed.

"So what do we do now?" asked Devi glumly, tiredly putting aside his written essay on the arts of mecha-battling...
Misako shrugged because it was pointless having Larosin in charge of their unit. The thought was too awful because Larosin would just drag the investigation down... They were doing just fine until Larosin arrived with her pain-in-the-neck attitude. Besides, who liked that snobby control freak anyway...?
"Devi, you haven't heard from any of the other stulos... Speaking of which-"
"I'm not speaking to miss Foxtrot," Devi interjected angrily, slamming his fist on the desk. "not until she apologises. Phhhfft..."

"Had you and Vix-" Misako began, but the sleuth just ignored her as he scribbled responses...
Why won't they just make up?

"I've told the shifty 'foxlette' that she shan't contact us any longer." The Martin said in a matter of fact voice. Misako was shocked at the news, but hearing it from Devi made the news even worse, considering that the trio had been friends...
"Devi, you told Vixen those things? But you might have hurt her feelings." the Oeyken said, staring at the nolachant Devi...
"What about my feelings?" Devi's tone was dead serious this time, not comedic or joking...
"Lorithia, ever since these vanishings, our lives have been spiralling out of control. This time we must do something to right these cruel crimes." It was as if all the anger that was concentrated earlier had deflated and Devi's tone was sharp...

Devi was right in a way, but still Misako still wished he would be more sympathetic towards other people. Seeing as the was usually funny and light-hearted and the centre of everyone's jokes, maybe his attitude had changed due to recent events. Maybe it was a just Dakittu phase Devi was going through and one of those days he would snap out of his funk... Either way, the clock was ticking ever onwards...
"I'm sorry about startling you, Koko, but it's so hard sometimes to solve our problems... I have trouble with other Oeykens too, maybe they're too scared of me." Devi admitted, "Harsh without meaning to be."
"I don't find you scary. And I'm sure Vixen doesn't either." Misako stated as she looked down in shyness. "I'm sure its okay."
"Alright." Devi stretched and as he did, he noticed Vixen exiting the library and his eyes narrowed in sadness. "That fox..."

"Vixen," Misako ran up to Vixen and tapped her cheerfully on the shoulder... Vixen's hairstyle had noticeably changed and was longer and shaggier (more unruly to be exact). It was shaggy and recently influenced by Larosin's hairstyle. Also, today Vixen chose to wear a black mini-skirt and yellow-crystallised high heels (which was highly unusual for this tomboy)
"Hi Koko." Vixen said pitifully, avoiding the stulos and turning away from her... "What did Devi tell you this time. Lies I guess."
"Listen, Devi didn't mean what he said earlier this week." Misako said desperately, trying to make amends...
"Forget it." the girl stated, "I know what Devi did and its horrible. He also said I'm not going to work with the both of you anymore or contact you..." At this, Misako sighed and tried a different method. *Why not try to tell her subtley?*
"... Well, Devi said that, but he now says he'll forgives you after mecha-"
Vixen ran faster through the corridors before Misako could even finish her sentence...

"We must search the entire Soluna district," announced Larosin a few weeks later, "Even if the SPD must get a search warrant from those aliens, we show some discretion...!" Everyone blinked in surprise. Moonlight from two moons shone dazzlingly through the ultra-thick fibreglass window panes, making the night almost as bright as day... Detective Devi looked through his notebook, flipping through a few hand drawn diagrams he collected, "So what do all this clues demonstate," Larosin snickered,

"It is oblivious isn't it not?" The superintendent yelled, scaring Devi... "Near the shops. Tek's shop to be more specific... Misoti."
Misako was tired at being called wrong names for so long, almost as if Larosin derived pleasure from mispronouncation...
Does this superintendent show no mercy or sympathy towards others...? "Yes, Larosin?" At this Larosin had a very flushed face.
"Your unit shall accompany me on our private investigation, (perchance to dream)." The last words were

very soft and barely heard, however the Oeyken still heard them. *Wace? What is she intending*?! Misako stepped away from the lady, scared...

"Ah, lets not forget about your scar..." Larosin commented loudly, brash once more as the poor officer turned scarlet red...
"I'm sorry, but shu-" Just then Misako remembered the promised deal made in the alley and fell silent, glaring at Larosin...
"So that settles it. Masoti and Slueth Devi shall search the grounds of Soluna... Any objections?" The room was silent, except for Jarek toppling from his seat once again, his fur caught on the chair...
"Then shall we roll on already..." Devi complained, "We don't have much time to lose."
He got up to leave as Misako wordlessly handed him the van's keys. "You drive or me?" Larosin strode over to the minivan.
"Whatever, you two decide over a nice coffee and I'll be the *autrious."*

"Left! Turn, U-turn to the left!" Misako peered over dashboard as Devi attempted to 'drive', if she could even call it that...
the minivan tried to swerve a passing pink hovercycle as it screeched on the road like a fiend... The wheels gained traction as Devi shifted into frontal gear, the engine roaring and chuffing. "Oh no, Devi, you drive even worse than any of us..."
"At last she admits it," Larosin grumbled as she hung on for dear life, gripping the edges of the leathery seat as it rocked.

Comically drivers on the huge highway watching the performance were also driving awkwardly, shaking their claws and fists at the detective. The others seemed amazed at how awful his driving truly was as the van kept colliding with different cars...
"You couldn't pilot your way out of a spaceship!" yelled a male with sunglasses and fangs as he raced past in a flashy car...
"Learn to drive at Mecha-Lecka, did ya?! " shrieked a Oeyken passenger as the other in a red van laughed in glee...
"Look at that Martin goes!" cheered another pedestrian, coincidentally she was wearing a bikini and Devi smirked in pleasure.
WHAP! "What did you do that for?" yelled Devi as pretty Larosin looked shiftly. "I despise you." he muttered to himself.

"Engage Hover thrust-!" Misako stated as the van's voice-activated hovering mechanism kicked in automatically...
Instantly the minivan glided if only for a minute as it soared over a possible crash-victim (who screamed as it hovered).
"Hey, it worked - shimeiii. Why didn't I think of that?!" Devi was stunned at that cool device and kept looking at it.
"All eyes on the road," said a familiar posh voice calmy, "Besides, I heard that comment Devi."
"Are we there yet?" wondered Misako. Miracliously, they managed to drive to Tek's shop without any crashes or wrecks...
Although they did leave a trail of mayhem behind, the other drivers were screaming for their car refunds... Mainly because of the reasons stated above. It was then that poor Devi fainted out of sheer exhaustion at the wheel after they parked the van.

"We have a search warrant from the SPD and we're not afraid to use force!" Misako demanded outside the mecha shop as she flicked her white tanto forwards, "Come on out with your hands up and your... What's

the line?" Devi did another anime fall at that info, looking rather desperate. "Anyway, we have you surrounded." She finished the line. Larosin approached from the alleyway and kicked the heavy metal door with a few hard slams. One blow after another ensured there was a large hole in said door... All three pairs of eyes widened in shock, "Tek?!" they managed to breath.

There in front of them was the mechanic, looking worse for the wear. Miss Tek had some kind of ripped oily cloth over her mouth and her wrists were lashed together with ropes in a salior's knot. Larosin broke the long silence, observing the ropes heartlessly... "I knew it, we're dealing with a gang..." she savagely hacked the ropes with one slice of her broad weapon.
"Tek? Was the firking gangster who did this to you right here and what was his name?" asked Devi in grimness.
"Ricky Tayrion," gasped Tek hoarsely, "I think he's gone now to report back to his Marquis." Something clicked just then.
"The same Marquis who wrote those notes to the SPD...!" Misako took a step back, she remembered that note from before...
"Tek, I've heard about Floorivator. When I went here a few months it was broken. Did they repair it somehow?!" Tek nodded.

"Yes, but I had nothing to do with it. Those gangsters supposely from FalconReach had intervened. They tied me up so that they could do whatever they wanted under the Dakittu of night. But don't go down there - it's dangerous." Tek warned...
"Why?" Larosin butted in rudely, "What's so dangerous about the Floorivator." The mechanic turned pale at the questions.
"Ricky and the others taunt me. said that they converting level for their uses... Cyborg creation, to be exact...!"
"What the-?" raged Misako, "That's their diabolical master-plan?" Tek shook her head wearily.
"More than that," Tek rubbed her wrists, "I think Falcon-Reach is in cohorts with a higher power- The Marquis."
"Thanks for the information, we must now be off for Falcon-Reach Avenue." Misako concurred.

Immediately, a wolf howled outside the shop and everyone jumped in shock as a human shadow appeared.
"Outside-!" Larosin ran to the front of the shop, "By the power of numb-skull I compell you!" A loud sound banged.
"Larosin-!" Devi dove for the door as a bloody scene awaited him... "Who's there?"
"Thought you got rid of us?!" Kayo hissed as he gripped the front of Larosin's sweaty coat. *"Kaede! Attack!"*

A bird's cry ensured as Kaede swooped in like the manner of a bird. Instantly, her hands morphed into metallic claws and raked the Superindent's wrists, despite Larosin's screams for mercy. A dark liquid trickled down her arm as she gripped it in pain... Then Kayo tossed her aside like a rag-doll as Larosin whimpered softly. *"The deed is done. I shall deal with her later, on the Marquis's terms..."* Horror and dread dawned on Devi's face as Misako ran to Larosin's side.
Is she alive? Please let her be alive-!
"You monster! How dare you." Devi screamed at Kayo in anger... "You two show no mercy...!"
"Eliminate him!" screeched Kaede, revealing bird-like eyes and almost complete metal body... *"Deal with theeeem!"*

Please, help me... Someone help me. Anyone... Olapen thought desperately as the last vestiges of consciousness drained away.

Chapter 16: Denziens of Night

Author's Notes: *Heehee, the new chapter...! Time for some good Terminator jokes (lol) Ummm... Nothing much to say cept Larosin is more perverted than you readers thought (Surprise: she's a lesbian) XD And the quote from one of my fave shows, Heroes: 'Save the Cheerleader/Save the word'.*

For a moment, Larosin stood there clutching her arm like a lion wounded of its pride. The shocked expressions on the other alien's faces as they watched only hardened Kayo's determination as he pounced from his former hiding place. He was like a slinking shadow. Devi hardly resisted a shiver watching the once 'human' figure, it was surreal to see where living flesh conjoined into cold unemotional metallic surfaces. He could even see the clothes, ragged and yet flashy. Kaede supervised Larosin briefly, piercing unnatural eyes threatened SPD force to stray towards her... Any time now they will attack, no telling when. A definite shiver went up all three spines. Kaede leant closer as a fiery beauty as Kayo slunk around the corner...

There was a louder sound as the cyborg walked, almost irritating to hear. A glint of bronze in the night showed full extent of the singer's transformation. His body muliated beyond what humanely possible, there was a gasp of shock from Misako as she realised it was Kayo Regalis she was looking at. The same rock idol who everyone had admired. Metallic joints in both hands, misshapen optical-fibre wires running from his flexed spine, steel arms and cast-iron plates on his legs... He looked half mecha to her eyes. Kayo's face was still there, but a quarter taken up mostly by machinery, glass and hardware.

His one eye, lanky ruffled hair and fleshy face were all that remained of his 'humanity'. The rest were warped. In short he was a true horror. Compared to her band-partner, Kaede looked quite 'tame' and icily beautiful. But still metallic parts were apparent on her too. Misako was glad her friend wasn't there to see him. If Vixen could see cyborg Kayo, she would have a fit.
"Don't do that deed, Kayo." she begged. But it was if he wasn't listening, focused.

Hearing Kayo's socketed joints flex with apparent ease, now detective Devi knew the true meaning of teror, heart hammering. And there was no glimpse of emotion behind those eyes... It was as that cyborg was programmed for the sole purpose of annihilation - and the whole SPD team were the target... Targets. Devi closed his eyes for the inevitable, squeezing them closed... It was eerie, almost like that scenario in 'horror holograms' he saw back on Mars with his sisters...

Except the hero always won in the end, but out here Devi realised the outcomes were much slimmer. It was fight or flee the threat. Protect or submit. How can this single team fight these two victims of Marquis organisations? Terrific, it was a clever plan alright. Sending out the victims, risking lives in order to protect the Marquis. Perfect opportunity to make a bad pun and he couldn't think of one. Ironic. He surveyed the two with eyes of brimstone, keeping watch on the two unfortunate victims.

Beyond the Martin how the Marqius could twist those aliens and make them do his bidding... It was deadly and cruel to them and nothing to joke about. The SPD were only doing their duties and he must solve the puzzle. Kayo was still gaining speed from fourteen metres, moving on four steel limbs like a beast. The robotic rock-star went by in a flash. "Do not move," Devi shouted out, voice trembling as his arms spread out before Kayo... Devi touched only air, Kayo had dodged it.

First move was too quick. a metalic fist flew out of nowhere and plunged with precision. A rib cracked. Kayo twisted and a tightly manoveoured round-house kick soared through. It landed squarely on intended site. The sleuth felt like his chest just caved in for the second time. "AAARHH!" Pain-stricken cries

escaped from his lips, he never been attacked before. It was like kelf, a living kelf. He gasped for precious air. Momentarily the world spun as Kayo stood victorious. *"Want more?"* Devi spat some blood out, hacking coughs racked him... It was a pain like no other, he was loss of words.

"No, Devi!" Misako protested from her corner of the twilight street, in unbelief at Kayo's deed. The notepad Devi treasured fell from limp fingers as he staggered. Kayo snarled viciously, gazing at Devi in... Distaste? Was he about to end it all for Devi? Was this the intended victim the Marquis wanted...? Was it... was their search futile? Should the SPD run for it... Now?

Thoughts whirled. But they simply couldn't leave Larosin behind. It would weigh on her mind if they left Rosia to the mercy of the cyborgs. Despite all the hatred and hardships Larosin gave her, Misako felt unprecedented pity for the Superintendent...

"The Marquis wills it for me to act the deed out. And now all will be at the mercy of commands unseen." Kayo breathed harshly, turning towards the latest victim, Larosin. A flash of pulsing light. It was immediately interrupted by the unexpected. He missed the target completely... The cyborg turned quickly. *"Kaede?"* Kayo rasped. Kaede nodded firmly as incredibly Misako recognised that look of humanity finally return, it was a faint glimmer of sympathy... As if Kaede understood their plight and knew it well...
It was all impossible, Kaede and Kayo were under the commands of the Marquis. Could it be that Kaede was resisting the Artificial Intelligence implanted inside...? It took only a few seconds for the silvery-haired Oeyken to fully aware of *Kayo the monster*... Something snapped in Kaede's mind.

"KYAAAAA-! Regalis, I'm so sorry for this, but I must do this... for your sake only." Kaede screamed in a human voice, breaking free. The robotic Oeyken placed a hand on Kayo's shoulder, gripped it and with a free hand - slammed him onto the wet concrete ground with an awful finality... Wires shattered as Kayo screeched in agony... The pericing screeches would never end, but it was soon over. Kaede glanced at Misako, "Misako. Where were we?" she stated casually. It was as though they were discussing mecha models. Devi's mouth was still gaping from the horror they just witnessed. "Did you silence him?!"

"Larosin-!" Devi gasped and ran towards the superintendent and clutched the bleeding wrist. "Speak, for Lariat's sake, we need to get her help!" Tears began streaming down the Martin's face as Misako looked on, deeply concerned for 'Rosia'. "Contact the Uni." Devi ordered, "Contact the Dean Warlic..." Misako nodded numbly, but just then they heard the voice.
"I'm not dead yet!!" Larosin snapped, opening her eyes. Devi yelped and nearly dropped the vain Larosin.
"You're alive-!" he pointed out, shaking in fear as though she had risen from the ground like a ghost.
"Of course, naturally." the superintendent winced and grabbed her injury... Her voice had undeniably softened...

It seemed all the former harshness fell away, leaving Larosin's feelings vunerable. Pity overwhelmed Misako again, seeing her annoying coworker in this condition didn't make her feel better. She felt empathy for the Superintendent... "Here Larosin," Misako offered Larosin a cooling-aid (don't know what they're 'called')... However concerns were unfounded, the model pushed the item away irritably...
"I do not need your sympathy, much less your pity!" Larosin stated as she held up her bloodied wrist... The green haired Oeyken froze. It was almost as if Rosia had read her mind. "I'm-I'm sorry, Rosia. I was only trying to help." Electric-blue eyes glowed mellow yellow. To the amazement of Devi and Misako, the cut seemed to heal by itself. They watched in awe.
A red blush occurred on Larosin's cheeks...
"Don't be. However, thanks for your concern, Oeyken friend." With a sinfully upturned smile, and before Misako knew it, Larosin pecked her on the cheek briefly... *What the-* "AAAIIIEEE!" Misako shreiked, flushing red when she realised what happened...

"I wish I was shut-down," Kaede said and her harsh words were accentuated, "far better to be dead than to be utilised as an instrument for the firking Nostra Cost!" The former guitarist glared at her silver hand and it shimmered before morphing fluidly into a recognisable shape. "We're formidable assassinators for destruction. How many more lives became lost by our hands? Our programming... was futile."
Misako was in shock as she recognised the lone appearance on Kaede's face. It was all too familiar, almost eerie.
"Cyber-virus, it spreads." Kayo winced as he adjusted his gleaming iron neck, it cricked.

Devi could see where the flesh soon reverted into metallic areas of shiny aluminium. "Everyday I pray that Lariat take pity, spare us pain of transforming into hardware. Kaede, don't you remember these people?"
His one human eye swivelled around at Officer Misako, most of his face was covered by silvery material. It was disconcerting to see that half-human face...
"Kaede's human memory, what's left of it is incomplete." The singer commented sadly, gazing at his hands in some kind of unfathomable regret. "The program was ripped by defragmenters. However, she remembers you..."

"Save Soluna city, save the Universe." Kaede repeated, "Before the Marquis strikes... Please." The cyborg Oeyken's glowing eyes glistened as though sparkling... The words were all too familiar. Countless times aliens needed rescuing from their plight. And now they depended on her, as though she was a super-hero of some kind. But how could Misako answer their praises... When she was as flawed as they were. It was then that Kaede turned her gaze away... Errevokably avoiding the truth.
"If you don't, we're doomed... Understand?" The soft voice was harsh now in anger. "I doubt the Marquis and his cronies took us lightly, he will dispose of us once we prove useless..! What can we do now to repay you, forsaken one?" the Cyborg demanded, dim moonlight shining... Now it was Misako's turn to stutter, what Kaede said was true but what did they mean...?

"The least you can do to repay services - want revenge too. Forced against our wills, we did not ask for this. We want to join your temporary team so *that damned firkin'* Marquis gets what's coming to him." Kayo explained to Larosin seriously, head hanging in shame. "And now it's personal. No mercy." admolished Kayo with a dreadful finality... A dangerous glint in his eyes.
"Okay, alright! Oh shimei..." muttered Larosin in fear, scared of Kayo's expression... Devi almost burst out laughing at this...
If seeing Larosin scared wasn't funny, then what was considered funny anyway?

"The cyborg-duo want to join our awesome and superior team... That rawks! Habre sancho!" Devi added by making jokes.
"They're not the only ones," an Alvenos spoke up unexpectedly, the night covering his face... Everyone fell from shock at hearing that, they weren't expecting that voice! "Wace? It's only us!" Diaglo chuckled in delight as Mithlos nodded seriously... "We wanna join 'cause- let's face it. Your SPD team a little short-handed." Mithlos stated. "And us Alvenos want to investigate where the hot stulos had vanished to -"
"No, no and no!" Larosin shot back, spitefully glaring at the team of males, "This for qualified proffessionals only...!" Stunned temporary silence erupted as the males scowled at the Superintendent and made some rude guestures...

"You have a predijuce against Alvenos?" Diaglo angrily flexed his clawed fists, *"Syrkyir."* he muttered. It was extremely lucky she couldn't understand his words. "We still want to find the missing stulos. There's one missing. We've notified Warlic..."
"Dean Warlic?!" Kayo looked rather angry, "Warlic." he repeated hoarsely, putting metal hand to his lips, he glanced warily...
"Sure, all can join the Unit," Misako added - despite Larosin's anguished protests of 'NO! Miss Irwa!'... She sighed shyily.

"I have a rather simple plan to get us into Falcon-Reach. Follow the SPD unit to the Clothing shop... I'm sure we can get discount Xanatolv disguises-" At this Rosia looked like she would rather take charge again instead of this Oeyken...
"Oh goodie. This is exactly like a mystery film." Dune yelled excitedly, the rest of the nominated Alvenoses nodded...
"If we can't *look* like Xanatolvs, can we at least *smell* like them?" Stulos Diaglo pointed out and Devi still chuckled at this...
"Eau De Xanatolv, anyone?" Devi laughed to the glares of the girls, "Just joking. Anyway, Koko still smells like one." The enraged girls were onto Devi before he could make fun of them anymore. "Hey, letiggo! Ow, that was my tailbone!"

"I think this second stupidest idea we've ever ventured into," Devi muttered later, inspecting himself with dismay. The other Alvenos were also checking their Xuntolv disguises with awe. "I hope you know what you're doing with the scheme, Misako!" he called from the dressing rooms... Larosin was looking prissy again, supervising disguises with ease. "Hurry up, Devil...!"
"Don't you call Devi a devil." screeched Kaede from the corner of the room, "He is both a loyal and true guy." Misako quite agreed with the cyborg...

"We can't wait much longer for our plans to unfold. If we do, then the Marquis shall -" shivered Misako, trying not to think about the consequences of what they were trying to do... Well, they had to try, no matter what the risks were.
"We're ready," announced Mithlos in his Xanatolv outfit, "Hey, we should market the outfits... What do ya think?!" The rest of the Alvenos shuddered at thoughts of everybody wearing Xanatolv costumes like mascots at a Mechaball convention... Like that would ever happen.

"Okay! We know the plan. Kayo and Kaede will assist us in intergration into the *Howl's Angels* mob. We bet that they might question some of us... So Rosia can lead those answers while distracting them with her flamboyant actions..." planned Devi with a rather twisted grin. Kaede snorted with derision, some plan this was. Likewise, you-know-who wasn't impressed...
"Hey! Devil." scolded Larosin with a shout, "I'm the very principle of a legendary Superintendent. So why choose me?!" No reply, but the Martin just snickered at her reaction. At last Rosia wouldn't call him insults ever again...

"If this ruse doesn't work?" asked Mithlos and Diaglo cautiously. Detective Devi looked grim at the question...
"Then we all run like the mechanical hounds of kelf were after us." finished Misako, "Either that - or we all run around like some cowardly chickens. Our choice. Hopefully these Xanatolvs don't bite hard if they find out."
"I'll choose the chicken option, *Hieltsei*." Diaglo said hoarsely, gulping with fear as his serpent tail lashed.

"So do you like raw steak or just dog food?" Johnny demanded at the disguised Oeyken.
"Say raw steak," whispered Diaglo, sweating in his hot Xanatolv costume, Misako and Devi nodded. "We'll take raw steak."
"Dancing with Xanotolvs or howling at the moon?" yelled Ricky.
"Who is our leader?" shouted Paula aggressively. "Cain S. Lupin."
"You know our boss?" yelled Johnny, "that changes things then, go on right ahead!"

"So you're the newbie Xanatolv," stated Cain leisurely, gazing at Larosin and the others. "Let me ask: how do you enter a locked building? Blow it down." "Blow it." "Mozart or Beethoven?" "Meat oven?"

Chapter 17: End of Innocence

Note: Olapen's chapter is coming up very, very soon. What do you suggest should happen when the SPD team encounter her while she's possessed? Should she have any power/Force like the other characters or hidden abilities? Read and review, more coming up soon. Any other things for next chapter? Any comments? Thanks for the reviews, really 'ppreciate it... The phrase *'Deux ex Machina'* basically means *'God out of the machine'* (or 'easy way out of an impossible situation', English term)

A list of powers the SPD team have currently:
Vixen Foxtrot: Ability to manipulate, reverse or fast-forward space-time continium (AKA the flow of time itself) Basic stage...
Larosin: Can heal most wounds and injuries within a few seconds. But it's only limited to minor injuries/cuts. Advanced stage.
Devi Whirl: The ability to tap into people's 'wavelengths' and capable of performing Dardeni (surrounding 'people' ignore him)
Misako Irwa: Full extent of her Force not fully shown yet. When activated, her calm nature turns more aggressive and primal... Advanced stage X1 (extreme).

Wow, this is really turning out to be cooler than I anticipated. XD With luck I can rev this saga up even more...

"And who's the one who yelled 'By the power of Crossiant?!' before those Xanatolvs? Thanks Larosin, you big-mouthed dolt of a Superintendent." Misako glared as Devi also grumbled angrily. The threesome were locked - with energised 'ropes' tied around their hands and their backs against each other as a dim indoor light flickered annoyingly... There was no telling
"Okay, Koko...! I admit that *was* my fault, simple slip of the tongue." Larosin stated. Struggling with the bonds which tied her, she fell down halfway through the task. "Those Xanatolvs are kelf-raisers." the chocolate-haired Oeyken muttered in anger...
"How long those dawgs going to keep us, been here for three hours!" yelled Devi, trying to kick himself to the padlocked entrance without success... His overactive mind was going 'stir-fry' in this utter boredom, he wanted out of here desperately...

"Reshejito! Isriuti!" swore Larosin in an unfamilar tone, scowling at this predicament. "Our unit should have bust our way through this joint in no time at all," She beckoned to Misako behind her back. Larosin was so furious, she had no choice but to lash out at the nearest person... "And it was all Koko's fault for thinking up that totally mundane costume-" Suddenly, the light gave out. "Koko! It looks like you're the blame for this whole situation." Larosin roared. Misako winced at all the things the Oeyken called her. The disguise was her idea, but it was Rosia who messed the plan up completely. It was no use pinning the blame. It was as though they locked in a iron cage with a Battleon monster, such was the superintendent's anger at the duo...

White moon-light spilled in suddenly, as the room filled with blessed source. "Cain wants to interrogate you all, excluding the Alvenos." barked rough Alvenos voice as a paw dragged out the tied-up 'people' one by one from the room... Despite Larosin's loud protests, gangster Xanatolv ignored them. It was then Misako realised that the Xanatolv was none other than Johnny the Beta-wolf. He grinned with glowing eyes as large as dinner-plates, "Cain and 'uffs," he howled joyfully. "It looks like the pesky Oeyken coward is there amongst the litter...! Runt-" It was then he was interrupted by a rather painful slap...

"OOF- fraggen...!" cursed Johnny as his dark shaggy hair covered his vision and bared his long pointy

teeth... There was an intense bark followed by a calm voice from the Dakittu. The background was revealed in an instant and the night was lifted. Devi shrank back in absolute fear as they realised the leader of the pack observing them. *Is that the boss, Cain?*

Misako squinted as the lights flared to reveal... A cozy-looking office with steely-looking compartments on the wall, there was an ancient computer in the corner, still beeping away the hours. Plus, if she tilted her head to the right, she spotted a bookcase and a couch on the side of the deceptive room. A stab of fear filled her as she realised that seated right in the middle of it all was undisputed leader of the Xanatolv pack, the elderly wolf... Cain Stanford Lupini 'the Third', the famous and wealthy enterprisal boss of *Amoresi.*
The old Xuntolv cocked his head in delight - chuckling at this. Yellow amber eyes glinted sharpily as he spied them... "Heheheh- owwwl." There was no telling what Cain would order to his own pack, time to wait...
"No way, we're gonna kick you tufftails," demanded Larosin - just as Johnny threatened to bite off her nose. That immediately silenced her. Misako thought she should use this tatic next time on Rosia.

"Let I see th' police units," demanded Cain with a sneer, the white furred Xanatolv was seated at a magahony desk...
"Owwwl...! Gertiay. They look skimpy, need more fatts on them bones I says..." He walked up and down on his four legs, sniffing all the while... Misako noticed that the leader was inspecting them carefully, like they were racks of ham at a market.
"Explain yourself," Devi burst out, "Why are you interfering in the matters of the Police Department's unit?!" Cain growled in absolute pride at these questions...

"Hose inquests shall be solve' in a minnae, Devi." The older wolf-Alvenos snapped his arthritic claws, standing on his hind legs to do so. His eyes glinted in surprise. "Whel, thi' lil whelp haf a battle'ound. In owrrr Xanatolv 'radition it i' considered a grrrate honour to flay a thou'and mechars and still live ta tell the tale. It is ov prrrride. You figh' your rown battles?" *Yes...*
Scared stiff of the elder Xuntolv-wolf, he could still bite if he felt like it. "Nowr, toss the' into thar next roooom of stream..."
"HEY! Wace! Stop it. I also bite you know." Larosin yelled as the black Xanatolv shoved them into the next room. THUMP. "Thanks for nothing, hey there's smoke. *Fire?!"* Devi screamed. Steam hissed through the steel room, obscuring their vision and making them hallucinate. To Devi's surprise when the vision was cleared from all red mists, who should they find but...

"Pascha?" Misako shouted in shock... Sure enough, Pascha was standing there amongst the steelish machinery and contraptions. She was observing them both sadly and curiously. Devi sighed in utter relief, maybe there was a way out of this...! "Pascha! Untie your dear brother from this binds...?!" She did not move. "Shimei, I demand you! Pascha, I'm gonna scold you for this!" Desperation filled his voice, the Xanatolvs chuckled. A private joke they had put on display indeed...
"Bakanugi. He still doesn't understand about Pascha." Ricky laughed. Devi recognised this, however incorrectly. Raging, the Martin struggled in bonds as Larosin just sniffed in pride... It was painful to see the Martin tortured beyond sanity...

"Pascha, you're dating a Xanatolv? And I thought you were pure-hearted." Devi roared, Ricky shook his head.
"Incorrect. She's our *second* informant, it was always the one you least expected... We 'inititated her' into our Howl's Angel gang months ago and she was spying on your unit." Devi's eyes widened in rage at this.
"YAWA...!!" Devi screamed in dismay, it was a sound of pure agony. Misako wanted to do anything to stop the gangsters from torturing him, but... She was tied up, Larosin was tied up. How could she prevent those attacks on Devi directly happening...
"I had no choice in the matter, my true brother. They forced me. Forgive me." Pascha stated as she wept tears... Of joy? Of Dakittu and falseness? Whether they were true tears or not, Misako couldn't tell from her

view. But then Devi, her brother, just couldn't forgive her for that act...

"PASCHA!" Devi's voice was now trembling badly... "Betrayed by my own dear sister. Ironically. Koko, don't look up to me... I wouldn't have made a good role-model to Pascha, neeways." The Xanatolvs grinned at this, approaching them now. Misako felt even more hopeless, how to comfort her friends in hour of need? She wouldn't have guessed the spy was Pascha. How could they get out of this together... How? What was the answer to escape... Ingeniousity always helped her escape so far, surely there was a way. It was then the idea struck as suddenly as a lightning-strike. *That was it!* She remembered what Master Tsuba said earlier... *It was: "Emotional events often trigger Force as a destructive result...!"*

"Deeta. You can use your Force. The same wavelength as Matos Tsuba...!" Devi looked skeptical and Rosia snorted in laughter. "What are you on about?" Larosin demanded as Misako begged her to play along for their sake. The insult seemed to work immediately as Devi glared at the name. *"I am not on the same length! I can't use the Force! I'm useless!"* Devi screamed in agony as Pascha joined in the prowl. Time was running out, running out soon... Their fangs were bared in fury.
"Oh. And don't forget that you are capable of powers!" Larosin's voice sang out. "Beyond anything Soluna can see. *Look!"* Misako felt like cheering, her tatic was working, she could see that Devi's Force was activating. Each of the Xanatolv's eyes were turning away from the source, unable to see them. Pascha was milling around like they were invisible... It was working. Devi's eyes were turning a violent shade of colour. *Great, it meant the Force was working, but for how long?!*

"Tryiclade-Fusion... I shall answer your call!" A voice called out as something like clear-smoke licked the centre of the room shortly before exploding outwards in waves of increasing cosmic ripples. The effect took place immediately as the Xanatolvs paused like unmoving statues, not a sound was heard. It was frightening enough to see the sheer power that it showed... Misako could only gasp in awe, it was so magical and eerie, she had the slightest idea who could be behind this ability. Unfortunately, Rosia had no idea who could be behind fearsome show of power. Timid whimpers escaped from Larosin's lips...
"Reveal yourself to the SPD!" Larosin said in absolute fear, attempting to shield herself from the unseen threat. "Show your form, you fiend or foe...!" It seemed as though the chocolate-haired supermodel had a true fear of... The unexplained.

Instantly a swooping noise, red sparkles appeared and Vixen materialised out of thin-air along with Diaglo...
"AARRRH!" Larosin yelled as she leapt backwards in surprise, nearly hitting the floor.
"A ghost! Demon! A fiiiend!" Misako only casted a knowing glance at Devi, who grinned at this development. It took three unsuccessful attempts to calm the scared Superintendent down... *Never realised Larosin had a phobia of magic.* Devi thought. Vixen looked neutral at this statement.

"I sent the Alvenos from GEARS to aid you and then I tracked you here using my Force." She inspected her shaggy flamed hair before adding scornfully, 'Devi, you should have thanked me in gratitude. Besides it's a good thing I came, Koko. Right??"
"What if you weren't back in our team," Misako whispered, hanging her head in utter shame. "We're not experts on the topic of Earth. Xanatolvs tricked us with an question on musicians... Zohart or something similar." The red-haired Oeyken just didn't have the heart to correct Koko on that error, instead she glanced at Larosin. "I brought something just in case we met up..."
"What?" snapped Larosin, her eyes were wide, "Untie me, you ingrate!" she yelled at the two strangers... Diaglo scowled...
"Untie me," insisted Misako desperately, "Look in my backpack." Curiously, Diaglo reached for the item and looked inside. There was a full vial of what looked like green ooze glowing lumiously. *What on Soluna is this substance?* Diaglo wondered at the strange weird substance. It seemed to have a life of its own.

"It's a gift from Seraphine and the Slayers. Listen, I have a plan. Quick, pour the green goo on each of the Xanatolvs." Urgently, Diaglo obeyed her commands, pouring a 'little' on the nearest frozen Xanatolv, Johnny. Instantly, suppressed magic poured out of the Alvenos's form. Within a few 'minutes' a human Johnny snarled there with brown hair and pale skin. Diaglo's mouth dropped open in shock and wonder at this... *"Hetrilos!* You're a genius. It's like magic!" Officer Misako smiled slightly, "Something of magic," she added softly. Diaglo applied most of the green mixture to the rest of the Alvenos-wolves...
"Now what?" Vixen yelled, panting slightly. Misako nodded sternly, now untied with the other SPD captives ready to obey...
Now it's time to not look back in sorrow... "Meskoti, I'm waiting for your response." Larosin added impatiently.

"We shall run five minutes ahead of the Xanatolvs when Vixen gives the command. We escape through that corridor. I'm truly sorry Devi," Misako turned from him sympathetically. She wasn't sure she would be able to handle seeing her friend Devi cry. And cry he did. The Sleuth's eyes were brimming with tears, he loved his sister so dearly despite his... annoyance with her?
"But we can't leave my Pascha behind, Koko." he insisted shakily. "She's my sister, my kin of blood," Devi's whitish hair was streaked with sweat, he wept a thousand tears. Misako sighed desperately, it was a very harsh world. To be strong in mind, it helped to be strong in nature, but Devi's cries pierced her like perpex glass. It was hard not to cry a million tears in this situation of survival.

"Go!" Larosin's yells immediately brought her back to reality, a jolt of terror. Larosin shoved past her, Vixen did too. So did Devi and Diaglo, they were soon running like the wind - their lives depended on it. Soon they were all being chased by the terrors of Falcon-Reach. It was only by sheer luck that the SPD, Vixen and Diaglo managed to escape into the corridors, slamming the switches behind them. "T-that was close." Misako breathed shakily as the iron doors closed, preventing the furious Xanatolvs from entering... And poor Pascha, Devi noted wistfully. The Martin kept glancing at the door as though he regretted leaving his sister behind.

SMASH! Kapow! "Wata?" exclaimed Mithlos bursting in from the other entrance, followed by the rest of the Alvenos. A shot laser nearly singed his 'smoking' hair. Panting with exhaustion, Kaede shut down the second entrance with her special circuit finger as Kayo looked worn out. Larosin looked incredilous at this event...
"So what exactly did we miss?" she asked lightly.
By the black looks the group were giving, the unit had missed out on a lot of intense excitement since they had last met up...
"They were after us *Werojei*! Cyborgs with uber computer terminals and ten arms!" Diaglo protested wildly...
At this the Oeykens looked even more confused, "Wace?" commented Devi sternly at the bad news.
"Run that by us again." insisted Vixen, "They made more machines?" Mithlos nodded eagerly. "Oh boy,"
"Looks like we're trapped here until we find a way to escape those Falcon-Reachers." Misako gritted her teeth.
"What about getting a *Deux Ex Machina.*"commented Larosin loftily as everyone stared desperately.

Just then Kayo (in fustration) decided he had enough. "Firking wall. I'm going out, whether you all like it or not!"
Drilling his morphed hand into one of the shiny steel wall, it revealed the enexpected. He had hit *another* solid object...! It sounded hollow.
"Wace?" the cyborg commented in awe, "Kaede, all of you. Help me out here!" The person motioned with his other hand as everyone else helped out, even a relucant Larosin (who muttered 'Close enough.')
Suddenly, they realised that the wall had hidden an ancient secret-passage. It led to a steel locked door with

deep scratches embedded on the surface.
"Oh my firking Lariat," was the first thing that Detective Devi yelled out in amazement, "We found something!"
"Hang on," pointed out Mithlos, "I think this is the answer to all these weird disapperances at GEARS Uni."
"It just looks like something out of *Indiana Jones* to me." Vixen said, tracing the occultic symbols on the door.
Everyone sweat-dropped at that reference - "I've never heard of that person." stated Larosin sardonically...

"Says you." Misako shot back, examining the wall with ease, "There should be a hidden panel around here."
"Luckily, I also took archelogical exhibitions with 'Val' then," said Vixen, meaning 'Valencia' of course.
"So that's what you've been doing in your time while avoiding Devi." Misako said as her friend nodded once...
"Oeykens look," Diaglo yelled in a thick accent, "It's a code-message thingy in my dialect." He pointed.
"Can you read it?" asked Kaede desperately, "We Solunians certainly can't...!" At this the stulos smiled.

"Irletic! Of course, repeat after me. Sort of password." commanded Diaglo, placing a hand on the panel...
At once words were spoken in a voice of harshness. *"Ethu keriju Quetani, foereni iyiru Dure Kanri... Obey!"*
A cold wind immediately picked up as the sandstone walls shuddered once. Then suddenly the room...
The lit iron room blacked out completely, leaving a single torch burning on the solely ancient walls.
"Any more smart ideas, Diaglo?!" asked several annoyed voices. Luckily they couldn't see him blushing...

Chapter 18: Incarnate

Officer Misako: Chaptré 18

Incarnate

Author's Notes: Not quite finished yet, enjoy what is installed so far...! (PS: I finally updated! Squeee!) This chapter is rated PG13+ for implied violence and an exorcism scene - one of the darkest MQ 'fics out there. If anyone watches *Shugukun No Shana, Kamikaze Kaito Jeanne* or even the *Venus VS Virus* anime, they would probably get those references. If not, enjoy! (PPS: Does anyone like this chapter? Review.)

"Alright, so how do we get through this door?" Misako exclaimed after the group's several failing attempts to crack the password. Diaglo shook his head stiffly as the banging sounds from outside the corridor stealthily grew louder... And closer.
We better hurry, those Falcon-Reachers are out for definate carnage...! Larosin shook in her boots, unable to stand the suspense any longer... "For Lariat's SAKE! Koko, you're irritating us yet again." she snapped in strained voice, leaning against the wall.
"Stop calling me that," Misako protested as Kaede tapped against the wall, hoping for a sealed button somewhere...
It should be right here, Kaede reasoned calmly with her logical mind oblivious to the chaos and panic everyone else was exerting (lol). In boredom and dull resignation, Mithlos decided to have one more 'glance' around and scanned the area.

"Hey, Solunians! Oeykens and Alvenos! I found... I found... *A red button with a skull symbol on the wall?!* Gee, where did that come from?" Mithlos wondered as everyone looked horrified in shock... His hand hovered above the symbol indecisively, it was so hard to choose. "Should I press it or not?" Vixen mouthed the words 'No,' her mouth felt dry at this development...
What? Mithlos found a... dangerous button of DOOM?! Misako gasped with fear at this, her eyes moving from Mithlos's open hand to the wall he was about to touch. It was crucial their SPD unit didn't make any mistakes, however what if they...?
One press and it would be over, they could escape with their lives hopefully intact...

Or a more likely and logical explaination - We all would plunge to certain kelf and desolation, pessimistic and morbid thoughts quelled. The Oeyken didn't want to think about the trap, but that red button was certainly deadly that was for sure... But she had a mission that was unfulfilled. They couldn't stop now, it was far too late for that. Mithlos looked scared at the decison he had to make. Vague seconds seemed to drag on for endless eternities as one of the Alvenos cried out in shock...

"Mithlos, I don't think you should press it!" yelled Diaglo, however his dire warning came too late as in that second, the stulos punched the button. "Wace! The incompetent *Jisequr-"* Diaglo's foreign curse was suddenly cut short, his futile words hanging in mid-sentence. Nothing happened... Vixen and Larosin let out their breaths at this, air whooshing out.
"We have to find a way out Alvenos and Oeykens." yelled Mithlos, his voice filled with rising anxiety, "Those Falcon-Reachers are almost at the door!"However this event simply didn't end there. The event was like a domino effect, one thing lead to another. It was unpredictable what happened next, Mithlos 'stroked' the ancient walls accidentally in oblivious panic... It was an attempt of desperation, but it still (somehow) worked.

Instantly a dusty glass screen that came from nowhere slid out of the panel inconspiciously... It looked functional, but yet it had an antique look to it. It did not look like a standard modern Hologram-producer

and more so the scratched metal frame had a heraldic emblem of an unfamiliar logo... Larosin simply brushed against the smooth surface carefully with a manicured finger, and instantly the screen lit up with a warm glow. "What? It wasn't me! Don't look at me that way." The loudmouth accused, with Misako (and everyone else) looking disapprovingly at her. Rosia had a subtle smirk on her face as she commanded Mithlos to press his hand against the screen. *Was it just concidence or did miss Fin-Schaets knew more than she let on?* Vixen wondered rather privately to herself... It would do some good to keep an eye out on that *firking* Oeyken.

"Huh?!" Mithlos yelled as an ancient mechanical voice whispered the following information: *'Identification Project: 'Ikakiro Data EX1' Gender: Undefined, please state it. Assign Harlinique Prothemus been confirmed, functional access provided. Have a nice day...*'
Both Misako and Sleuth Devi looked at each other confused at this, but there was no time for confusion... Already, the huge vibrations shuddered as the floor began to move on its own. There was a loud clunk and a shrill whirl of sound as a slippery and metallic chute opened up beneath their feet 'once more'... However, there was no surface-grip for their feet...
"WACE?! Arrrgh!" the entire group yelled as they realised they were sliding down into unforeseen depths... Without grip.

"I DEPISE THISSS!!" declared the recognisibly shrill voice of Devi, which was growing fainter by the second as the SPD unit plummeted towards the end.
"Meeee too...! It's tooooo slippery, it reeeeeminds me of a slippery dip...!" yelled back Vixen as Larosin glared.
"You thiiiink?" screeched superintendent Larosin in dismay, "I'm messing up my haair as I state this fact, static electricity!"
Despite the terror of it all, Misako had a bit of a laugh at the state of Rosia's shocked hair, sliding forwards...
"You are too proud," commented Vixen truthfully at Larosin, "You ought to check your words." Rosia seethed...
"Shuddup," Larosin yelled at Vixen as the rest of the misfit group tumbled out of her view. "Ehh...?! Everyone, wait for me-!"

"EXCALLLLIIIBUR!" yelled Diaglo excitedly as they all hit solid the steely ground with an extremely loud CRASHHH...!
At this, everyone toppled over each other, trying to untangle themselves. Most of the Alvenos managed to do this easily, but the team still stumbled in the enveloping darkness - they were swearing very loudly and profusely at the event...
"Ohhh... My head huurts," Devi groaned in regret, glancing at the others in desperate sorrow... The Martin was distraught after losing Pascha, it pained him so much that emotions he felt was raw. It felt as though life was unbearable for him.

"Everyone, I think that we should... find the exit." Misako muttered quietly, glancing towards the others who nodded quickly and eagerly. Subconsciously, she brushed against her healed scar and at once it stung like kelf... Wincing, she tried not to show the pain etched on her face. It was a curious sensation which was like agony. Why were these disappearance cases so difficult to solve, the Oeyken officer wondered to herself... As if it couldn't get any worse.

Just then, Larosin gave an extremely loud scream as she pointed at a random direction... Misako glanced up annoyed at this.
"There's someone over there...!" At this everyone in the vincity rolled their eyes, they were tired of Larosin's annoying antics.
"Sheesh, you should take a chill pill, Roxia." yelled Kayo, very irritated by the Superintendent's yells.

Besides his cybernetic form amplified shrill sounds even more... Added more 'fire' to his ire... He muttered with anger as he prepared his arm-blade.
"Larosin, I think you're over-reacting to this." Vixen shrugged calmly, not knowing whether to take the supermodel's reaction seriously or not...

That was before the Dakittu was immediately dispelled from the room and an icy coldness evaded the wide area at once...
"Is it just me or is the room getting colder by the second?!" Kaede exclaimed, she wished for central heating but there was none around for that matter. Everyone shuddered at the feeling of coldness settling into their very bones. Secretly, they were all wondering what had caused the sudden drop in temperature... It seemed as though the air itself was sharply dropping to zero. Dark mists were starting to form into tantilising shapes as though of commands unseen...

"Glacialis Caliga!" It may had been simply their imaginations, but everyone swore they heard a darkly passionate voice call out a gothic-sounding word. This incantation chilled them all to the core, Larosin especially was freaked out by these events.
"Wace?!" muttered Devi as he leant closer towards the stone-cold wall, the biting chill of it gnawed at his nerves... He bit his tongue in a desperate urge not to speak out loud his sorrows. Raw cold gnawed at them all like unrelenting Xuntolvs.

"This atmosphere is very cold," commented Devi as his teeth chattered, forgetting his thoughts for a moment. Being a Martin he was adapted to extreme heat and not cold climate. Misako was worried, this situation was getting even more eerie by the second. It reminded her of those Walque temples that she saw back on her own planet, but this room had... Malicious undertones, she could see the aura of the place. It wasn't a pretty sight. The aura had flashes of yellow-black light.

Suddenly there was a flare of burning-lit torches along the corridors and the room had flickering enchanting light casting on the walls. Sparks from the light threw itself against the aliens almost as if they had a life of their own... This experience was simply frightening, and they were at a loss for words. Lightning flashed briefly, illuminating the entire area... A sinister, thrilling laugh as a figure cloaked in spectral shadows strode towards them, almost daintily and lithe on... It was just then that Misako noticed something unusual - the someone was levitating, as though on air, a few centimetres off the steel ground...

The hood was lowered slightly, but everyone could recognise the familar purplish hair which dangled downwards... Its strange cinnibar-coloured eyes flared briefly, observing them with detached interest. The figure had worn a darkened navy-grey robe, which had neon-red highlights at the seams... Contrasts of the robe's clashing colours made striking impressions. It was then that the mists surrounding the figure was somehow inexplicably repelled...

Mithlos's eyes widened in shock, everyone gasped... Mithlos tried to get the words out, but he almost choked with unbelief at the sight... *It's... It's... It's the hot-looking stulos from Runehawk, but she's somehow changed.* Vixen's eyes were fear-filled... Diaglo took a step back, silver-blue tail lashing angrily as if he was ready to charge at the stulos. "Olapen, it's me... Diaglo." he muttered, pleadingly as though he had hoped for a slight recognition. However poor Diaglo's hopes were dashed.
Olapen slapped him sharply as if she couldn't stand the mere sight of him, *"Don't address me."* she scowled...

Larosin regained some of her pride as she stared at the scene playing out. Her scared expression became cocky once more. For some reason, there was an undeniable smirk on her elegant face. She lost some of her cowardliness from earlier before. Misako stared at Rosia in utter disbelief, was Larosin simply not afraid? Or was it simply pride that provoked the change...?
"Snap out of it weakling," Larosin stated calmly, leering at Olapen. "I believe you're weaker than all of us."

she added acidly.
Vixen looked just about ready to hit Larosin for that statement, the others were thinking the same thing... "Larosin!!"

"If it's a challenge you want, it's a challenge you'll get, fools..." Olapen yelled, eyes aglow in a distant frenzy. A arc of brightness formed as Rosia ran back towards the Unit, regretting the prideful words she had stated earlier... Stumbling in her attempt to escape, it was almost to late to inch back... *"Trial by sacred water, trial by blasting fire."* The stulos taunted, *"The pain you caused others shall be felt ten times magnified... You shall get what you deserve! None shall be spared."*

"Larosin, there's no way you can go across this crack!" Kaede looked furious at this sudden development as Mithlos continued reaching out. Whether or not it was by the Force energy, no one knew. But it happened anyway. Immediately, there was a grinding shatter as the ground itself erupted in rocky splinters and widened with ferocity. *Rosia almost fell in,* Misako noted with growing panic. Sharp fissures in the floor blocked the Superintendent as she reached the group. preventing escape. Rosia looked finally scared of the stulos, blue eyes frantic. Words deserted the supermodel at last, falling upon the empty void that awaited... "AARRRRH! Help me," pleaded Rosia near endless vertigo... "Misako, everyone. HELP!" Kaede couldn't stand just stand there, the cyborg had to do something drastic.

"Kayo, we have a duo!" Grabbing Kayo's morphed hand, Kaede did a running jump towards the hole and somesaulted over the crag in weird spinning circles. Everyone was dizzy just looking at those two flipping with ease. "Elite-team! We're the ultimate cyborgs. Cha-wa-rah!" she chanted as in a flash her arm changed into a metallic hook. Kayo's 'rope' changed back once they were on the ground... "Defeat both of us! Hit it, Kayo!" With fluid movements, Olapen's heavy robes fell away to reveal skintight clothing they hadn't seen before. Larosin grinned weakly. With distractions hopefully she could be unnoticed...
"You two not going to go one-on-one!" yelled Devi in disbelief at the entire situation, "Lariat, I can't look!"

"Hah! So, hand to hand combat, eh..." The Runehawk had a truly wicked expression on her face, *"Not shabby for Solunians."* "Pant, pant, EEEYAH!" Kayo strained as he threw a piece of iron at Olapen, trying to catch her off-guard. Unfortunately, she had noticed. With a flick of the wrist, she sent the iron hurtling towards Kayo... Kayo dodged the blow sideways, deflecting the metal with his reformed metallic shield for a hand. But it dented the shield and Misako could see pain on Kayo's face alone, it must had hurt him intensely. *"Let's see how you can handle the fury..."* Olapen seethed, eyes flaring once again. At once there was a shock searing through the floor and Kaede couldn't move, neither could Kayo for that matter. Larosin watched...

"Wace?! What have you done?" screeched Kaede as she realised the floor... Was magnetic. Vixen looked disturbed at this event, refusing to look at the scene. Misako also was going to avert her gaze, herself not sure whether she wanted to watch the outcome. But then sudden yells drew out as Kaede and Kayo were flung from their stuck positions, repelled by the Force. They crashed to the floor suddenly as Mithlos gasped with awe. "Woah... She's tough." Devi sweatdropped in pure fear.
"Now, who's next?" demanded the stulos with a chilling sneer. She turned towards Misako sternfully.
"That's right... You." Koko's pale eyes diluted in shock at this statement, she wanted to run but somehow the thought was resisted...

"No," protested Misako with absolute fear, "Don't fight me..." *What had turned her into such a demon?* she privately wondered, staring into the Runehawk's soulless red eyes. She remembered times that she had seen the lone stulos from a 'distance'. Back then, the meeting was neutral and the student seemed such a shy person, unable to answer anyone's questions. It was pleasant, but that was about the only time they had ever met. It was so different from the mask the Runehawk wore now.

The words caught, unable to be spoken in time. It was no use to argue. It was if time had slowed and stopped entirely... The frozen ice seemed to crack slightly in background as the two Oeykens prepared to fight using their skills... Misako did so unwillingly, her mind not on the challenge ahead but preoccupied with thoughts of capturing Harlin.

"Don't finish it!" screamed Vixen breaking her usual silence, "Please, Koko. Listen to us! Your friends." Devi appeared to wince at this, his Martin face displayed fierce anger. Larosin also looked really confused at this event, glancing in shock at what was going to happen... Was Misako truly going to challenge Olapen Jinitro single-handedly?! Nobody could believe this was really happening. It seemed like a desperate hallunication.
"Oh no," Rosia exclaimed loudly, "how did we get into this mess... Oh right. It was all my fault!"
I would if I could, dear Vixen. Can't surrender my mission. Not now. Misako decided, it wasn't an easy decision... She wanted to listen to all her friends, but didn't seem there was any choice. To locate malign Harlin, she had to concentrate. Now.

There was no rules, just plain inituation and instinct. Water brimmed slightly on her cheeks. spilling gently. She was going to regret this choice. She knew it. But it was her choice. Was it just chance that brought them all to this one place? It didn't seem so. Now, only she could remember the moves lady Aki taught her back in Anzu Lake... Dramatic events happened too fast.

"Geminus-offendo Levitas!" Olapen wasted no time in chanting a 'quick' attack. A chill ran through everyone's spine at these words. Whatever manner of a Force was this?! The officer's back stiffened for the coming blow... At first nothing seemed to happen. Misako thought she was spared until she saw a flicker of something in the frosty air. *That can't be!* Two branches of condensed electricity flashed through and headed straight for its target. It was... Lighting. Kayo shouted a warning, but it came. And there was nothing anyone could do about that.

At once, Misako felt a burning sensation as volts surged through, she was crouching in pain at the feeling. It was like nothing she ever experienced. It felt like she was burnt by a hot iron all over. Followed by a brief second of no pain, but then the firking lightning struck again and the words she yelled were drowned out by sheer noise. It was wrecking. *Make it stop-!*

Then the pain ended as suddenly as it begun. Calmess seemed to unleash something of Dakittu. Senses tingling unnoticably, adrenaline flooded through her mind savagely unlocking the power of the Force. Devi recognised this state, he knew how pure logic couldn't restrain Mako now. Eyes blazing deep orange, now turning towards Olapen sternly...
"So, you wanna play rough? Try me." Misako stated unbashed and daringly, in harsh selphural tones. She looked rather energetic in this state of mind. Diaglo noticed the change, staring in wonder at this. A side of Mako never he had seen. ("Don't know which's scarier," noted Vixen aside to Devi, "Demonized stulos- or the way SHE'S acting right now.")

"Hah, I don't think so. How can you defeat despairs which 'she' feels?" Olapen responded, whipping up a razor-sharp lightning bolt as Misako waited paitently. But it never hit its target as the shivering vermillion aura glowed so eeriely. Instead it stopped in mid-strike, the forked lightning disapated and it was no-more. The Force-fuelled officer jumped and dodged the intended move so easily, soon the dying electricity was gone from the room entirely. *"How could-?!"* yelled Olapen in apparent distress. It was just as well that the possessed Runehawk was too distracted to notice the slightest disturbance.

Steathily teleporting from the side, Misako slid to the Runehawk, her eyes still aglow with the lust of challenge. *"You were a ghost from the Dakittu, in the name of Loritha... I can sense it. Firking 'Tomogara' from Kelf.*" she snarled, pulling the gold chain. Without a word the officer floored her to the ground with forceful hasty kicks, trying to knock some 'sense' back to the stulos.

At once, the Force left while regaining her logic then she realised what happened... Shaking from exhaustion and horror, Misako covered her eyes. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" she yelled timidly. *Can't believe I just did... that.* Vixen cast worried looks towards the SPD unit. *"You are a twis-"* Olapen began to state, but before she could say the rest - Misako just let go of the pulled necklace.

"Save your breath," responded Diaglo, his snake-like tail writhing in sadness. "You were in bondage to that being, and this *trieoka* must end." Without a word, he leapt high and landed neatly on his clawed feet... *"Traskatrei*, If this is what it takes for thou to return, *Jakrini.*" Larosin was looking very incredulous once more, what hidden secret had Diaglo witheld? Gripping Olapen in a firm grip with his tail, he pressed his chest against the lashing stulos. "Checkmate!" Whilst he did that, he ripped the golden pure black Obsidian pendant from the female and tossed it aside. It skittered across the starry floor. He crushed this with his flexed feet as he went and it shattered into a million pieces, never to be brought back to its original state. *"Sanctium, faltiro tiiron!* Become like the ashes and to Kelf you shall return...!" Diaglo stated calmly. Seemed to work slowly despite her shouts.

Diaglo let go of the Oeyken and she sank to her knees in a daze, wafts of red smoke pouring from her form. Misako could see the harsh look ease away. *Was Diaglo a magician of some kind, kinda like Johnson?* Wide-eyed Larosin could only stare. After a minute, there was a response. Olapen looked beseechingly upon Diaglo, there was no sign of recognition or that she remembered anything. "Who are you... Wace happened?" she responded lostly before she noticed her 'different' clothes... "Why am I wearing this weird attire?" Frightned confusement filled her face.

"Diaglo, you're so awesome," cheered Rosia, leaping up and cheering for the victor. Vixen rolled her eyes, not typical of Larosin.
"You're okay?" asked Devi, concerned for missing stulos, "Did I mention that your hairstyle is cool." Olapen looked startled and Misako shrugged. Better than the other option anyway... Now there was only one thing left to do, capture Harlin. But now, seeming as everyone was together, this made her slightly bitter. Was it better for them if she left to do her duty? "You're safe now," Misako said to the Runehawk, giving her a comforting smile, "But I must continue this task - alone."
At this Mithlos grasped her hand to prevent this but she wrenched it out of the way...

"But you can't arrest Harlin alone!" protested Larosin, "He's dangerous." Misako shot her a knowing glance. "Don't you think I know. Imagine what would happen if *this* continues." she indicated the Falconreach HQ. "Thus I must face this person. Might seem I've forsaken you. Trust me. Been after him all this time." her voice whispered sadly...
"I'm truly sorry, you can't follow me where I'm going. Treading the lost, forsaken path between Dakittu and true justice." she said privately to Vixen and Devi. "Remember me this way." Devi and Vixen both looked crushed at this comment.
Misako stepped through the main foyer, awaiting for the encounter... A purring voice answered. "You've come, maid."
Her scar stung painfully.

Chapter 19: Blades of Despair

Author's Note: Sadly, this is the third to last chapter of the 'Officer Misako' saga... It shall reveal many things about the motives behind Therus's criminal organisation and also one character shall be revealled to be the ultimate traitor. I will update this as soon as possible, when I have more time. :D

2670 A.D. Marquis Therus's castle on Rajak Isle.
"Because of thy transgressions," *the Marquis spoke of the pain which ached rawly upon his bated breath, he paused for a moment. "We have become unto a godly Prothemus amongst these mere mortals. We have broken through the thin barrier of arcane Technoscience. My brother!" Harlinique stood still, listening interested at the breakthrough the nobleman had researced during his nightly forages. It was most unusual to see Therus so excited about this. It must have been merely a long time since he adressed Harlin like this, he was mostly a recluse, a scientific genius who had the most amazing gift... Harlin felt exhilirated- yeah, that was it.*

"We are transcending beyond the coils of moral fibre... If these -disturbing- experiments are only for our sake, and the suffering silence of enduring glory... Creation awaits for the brief asencion of artificial intelligence without sole implications - On what was and is to come..." Words lingered, Therus was savoring the slight litations upon the breath. And yet... The Marquis had felt a tinge of regret. So many wasted years of studying and backbreaking code encrypting had came into this. So many things had slipped by him - and yet he was not a century older then when he first started. It was a simple gift of his species that when used wrongly was like a firking curse... They were of course long-lived and older than they appeared to be. But it was a matter of time before- before the fresh memories faded, for there was a price for their immortality.

Harlinique ignored him, the sneering Alvenos was used to Therus's ramblings throughout the years. He felt a heavy hand upon his shoulder. Therus was observing him sadly through eyes of shameful Dakittu. It was unnerving to see the piercing eyes of gold.
"I promise you, my Harlin. I shall find a way to end your current regression. I shall fund my cyborg research to the Falcon-Reachers so that you live. And-" The words floated emptily upon the Marquis's lips.

"She hurt you, didn't she with that...?" Harlin turned sharply at the cause, as he shouted "Do not speak that Oeyken's name, she was a traitor!" Therus nodded stiffly and obligingly, he knew nothing would change Harlin's set mind from then on... The damage had already been done.

The present: 3008 A.D. Location Falcon-Reach Headquarters... Target acquired.
"You maid, you've come to pusure my brother over these discreet and petty factors. May I demand why you've chased my kin of blood over these matters?! Irreputable." The Marquis glared abominabley at Misako, guesturing at Harlin who had a sneer upon his face at this...

"Stay out of these personal issues, Marquis. You are an interferer in other affairs, you've started an organised criminal gang, destroying other innocent alien's lives in the process. And for what? For profit? For unimaginable glory? For immeasurable riches? What were your motives?" Misako tried to keep her voice steady, but it wavered a bit in the emptiness of the room. It was very scary to come face to face with the Marquis, it wasn't easy. But she also was determined to discover... The entire reason for it all. Holding her Energy-Burst sword in front of her, she approached them silently.

"You really want to know the whole truth, don't you? You ignorant little maid," spoke Harlin very lightly, sneering at this, "Quite unlike the other... Pitiful Oeykens we know of... They did not truly desire to find out

the difficult intricities of our own companies, they fled when they knew the entire story of the entire truth of our Dakittu... You have stepped into a deadly domain most illict, can you imagine how? But before you put up a fight, let me tell you this: Have you heard of the Greek God, Prometheus?" The ginger-haired male began scoffing as Misako stood there. His eyes glinted. She winced at the word 'maid'.
"Don't give me the whole story, Harlinique." Officer Misako breathed, trying to keep calm despite her fury...
This 'suspect' knew so many complex words that it wasn't possible, he seemed to know difficult words that should be beyond his knowlege! Harlin continued talking without stopping for a breath.

"Prometheus, the Grecian Terra god who gave the gift of fire to humans and was punished for his decision. He was chained to a large rock where the large vultures awaited- to peck his flesh off. As an allegory, so had the Marquis given the chance of Artificial Intelligence to the Solunians, only for that idea to become rejected. Get the picture, maid?" He had a proud expression. Misako was confused, what did this had to do with anything...? It was almost as if he was being insulting... He might have.
"You want answers, eh? Very well, maid. For your own sake, we shall elaborate. After all, we don't expect interruptions- do we, Harlin?" Therus had a calm half-smirk on his face, resting on his poised hand. The Marquis seemed to have sharpish gleams to his tawny-speckled eyes, at this very moment - the Oeyken tightened her hold on the swordlike dagger at her side.

"I shall start at the beginning. You see-" Therus placed a firm hand on Harlin's broad shoulder, "I did it purely for scientific research... That was initially my intention, a motive. Research on artificial intelligence was limited in year of 2980 onwards, but had I begged to differ from all of those clap-trap scientists with their so-called 'experimentation on robotic form'...?" Dignified Marquis paused for a moment, observing the reaction. There was none, so he ploughed onwards.

"Yes. The fact was, no one would cross borders defining 'cold technology' from 'pure untouched anatomy'. Burning ideas came to me, a vision: dream within dreams: And I wanted so desperately to see that idea come into being. The machine invented, but where was the intellect behind this?" The Marquis halted slowly, but Misako wasn't fooled - she could see flickering passions hidden behind his eyes. It was as if the royal 'alien' was 'reliving his youth' so to speak.

"But did anyone ever oppose the Marquis? One Dragon-researcher. And he paid the ultimate price." Harlin spitefully added, his eyes glinting as ghostly gems. Misako observed the behavior of her assailant, it was cocky and so sure of his superiority. She could see his lips moving silent. "Helikoth Jinitro." *The Marquis disposed of Olapen's father?!* As if he had read her mind, the ginger haired 'teen' smirked with glee... "No, that was not as you think, Koko. Let's just say that... Therus 'released Helikoth into the wild' after what occured between the two. But that was not the end of this. You think I'm young? Think again."

How old is Harlinique anyway?! Firking-minded son of Tyrano Mecha! Misako thought privately. Fire was searing through her again, anger at Marquis Therus and Harlin. And she hated him for telling her this, so unemotional... and arrogant!
Gritting her teeth, she spoke before he had chance. "You two did *what* to him? That doesn't explain anything!!"
"Dakittu Quetos? But let us finish our disclosure, maid!" Harlin interrupted with a sneer, the officer seething with rage.
The youthful noble continued. "Of course, with additional research going on - money clearly came from somewhere. I had recruited Falcon-Reachers from early on. The objective was clear, they aided me with science funding. So I sent them to-"

"Parma John's, so that they could steal the money?" Misako interjected. If Sleuth Devi was here, he would be impressed.
"Correct. You *are* smarter than you appear, maid!" Therus stopped to praise her cynically before continuing

on...
"I hated you on sight." glared Harlin, "You who tried to prevent our robbery, are nothing more than a biatch."

WHAT DID HE CALL ME?! Misako couldn't stand his dissing, but she couldn't invoke Therus's wrath. She was here to arrest them, not cause a fight. But his time will come soon enough. Therus was still talking through out all these insults.
"-I needed volunteers for the experiments, but there were none availible. We had to resort to kidnapping Uni stydents, of course there were other options but we needed more viable subjects... One thing led to another -"
"Enough." Misako sighed, glaring at her pepetrator. "I shall have a word with Harlin, it will just be a few minutes."

"Harlinique Prothemus, you and Marquis Therus are under arrest by orders of the SPD police. No questioning." Misako ordered stonily. Harlin looked darkly upon her scarred face at this comment. "Do you understand, Alvenos?" she hissed softly so he could hear every word. Harlin nodded slowly as if meditating on her hurt words, she could feel his back stiffen...
"Do you doubt what I am about to reveal to you?" Harlin yelled, bucking wildly, "Maid, I may regard you as 'prey', but do you trust your own inituation. Within your team... Is a traitorous *mole. She isn't genuine."* The officer felt her own patience beginning to fray at this. Labelling again. *Kelf hath no fury than a Shanti scorned...!*

"Wace? What kind of sick game have you played, you twisted being? Of course I trust my team, they wouldn't-" Misako yelled, but Harlin glared as she looped the sparking hancuffs around his wrists... That look- predator, inhuman... That expression on his face chilled her, it was calculating and knowing. And she was afraid as she led him towards the door.
"You shall regret this, Forsaken one!" Harlin whispered, "A fool not to listen to my advice. You are damned...!"

"Well done, Misako Irwa," Larosin sauntered through the doorway, "Caught them just like a Wrangler-mecha... In a deadly trap." She traced Misako's chin and at this, the girl barely resisted a shiver, that icy look again. Raw fulfilling, hunger...
The supermodel turned and whether it was instinct, Koko would never know. "I appraise you...!" Voice was passionate. *Engarde, Rosia!* In that split second, the energy-blast dagger whistled through air and caught Rosia's collar, tearing it.

That 'birthmark' Dragonslayer Rosia claimed was... A dark black tatoo engraved... with the familar symbol of-
"NO-!" Misako yelled, backing away from the superintendent, "How could you?! Rosia?" *Betrayed our trust!* Larosin chuckled, baring the Shadowscythe tatoo upon her slender neck for all to see. "Lorithia, you're a secret agent for them...!"
"My love for you is genuine. You should have realised." Larosin retaliated as she strode towards the officer. "The Shadowscythe gave me new lease of life, a rebirth... A new chance." Her voice lowered soothingly. *What?*

"Alas, you have no choice." The words were out, dragging a hostage with her... Wincing, she forced Vixen to her feet, clutching the poor girl with superhuman strength. She now picked up a syringe filled with an amber-like liquid.
"Choose wisely. You can bring Harlin to the Shadowscythe, or fail miserably. There's a simple alternative. change your alliance and join me, *Koko. Only you who have tasted true Dakittu can choose other's fate."* She smiled, not pitying the victim in her arms.

Misako was at loss for words, she couldn't believe Rosia of all aliens... could be so vindicative. *Why- of all people must she-?*
"Rosia, I don't have to! It is my choice, duty to protect people in Soluna. If you could *feel* Rosia, if you truly loved me, you would spare my friend." A slight flicker went across Rosia's dulled eyes. It was chilling and unemotional.

"You don't like me?" Rosia said, pressing harder. "I'm sure you have your reasons. But at your word, the syringe will not descend. And we shall be... *Together."* Upon this, Vixen lashed out at the supermodel. It was a reflex, but it was enough.
"Larosin! Can't you see that you are a pawn?" Vixen yelled, "The Shadowscythe care nothing for you!"
"I'm sorry - Larosin, you are deluded." Misako observed her reaction, "There is no 'love' behind your words, I've seen enough deceit, darkness and lies. Now, release my friend or I shall report Harlin and you to Duncan."
"Shut UP!" roared Larosin, enraged at the response, "You can't have me, then you won't have Vixen either!"
The superintendent looked angry, "Now, you'll have to reconsider your stance, won't you?" A twisted grin graced her lips.

"..." Misako fell to her knees in disbelief as she lowered the sword. "You've manipulated us... But I had trusted you, Rosia." she stated, voice stone-cold with little emotion left. Harlin had a furtive look about him as Larosin smiled - false once more and still conscending... It was an expression that she knew all too well. Ultimate pride... But for whom... and for what?
"This is our choice Koko. You can join us and spare your friend." Larosin stated darkly, fingering the vial. A sadistic act. "Do you still doubt yourself?" The 'Superintendent' coaxed. "A simple choice... Leads to signs of shadowy requiem." The officer's hollow voice wavered even as Rosia finished speaking, "And if I refuse?" Larosin's eyes lit up for a moment, dangerously.
"Your choice. Nice paradox, but I shall deal with Harlin... In my time." Misako was taken aback, gripping Harlin in one hand.

"Spare my friend." The voice was still firm, but it was breaking. While Rosia talked, Misako fingered the walky-talkie. *Clear that I can't do this on my own, not with Rosia betraying us.* she thought, *Rosia's not in her right mind, could Shadowsycthe plan this?* Feeling cool subtle against her palm, she issued commands, "Sleuth Devi, the entire team! Come, we have a Shadowscythe in our midst!" she yelled, taking Larosin by total surprise. Rosia looked furious for a moment, eyes wide with anger even as another police burst through door holding a gun. "Hold! You are under arrest for treason and attempted murder." But it was too late.

Scowling silently, there was nothing Rosia could do - but enact revenge against Misako's betrayal. "Double-crosser! After all we went through," she hissed at Misako. There was no pity. Her right arm held high with the noxious dripping vial, she gripped Vixen by the scruff of her neck. "You shall despair, despair I tell you! Cry rivers of tears for victims you once held dear!" Larosin screamed aloud as she plunged the full syringe. At that moment chaos erupted as Devi witnessed it. His eyes were wide. It was too much even for him.

"WHAT in Kelf's Nova-Forcefield happen here?!" demanded Detective Devi, equipping a weapon. He was horrified at the events that was unfolding, he had heard the conversation. "Rosia? The one behind all of this. TELL ME! Why did you..." The Martin bellowed, the sound echoing off walls as Vixen collasped. Rosia said nothing, smirked. An unreadable face. "Destination or a fluke of cosmic disruption. Call it what you will, but no-one understands but the Master of Chaos." The rest of police kept their gaze upon Rosia, unmoving. They tracked the lady as if they were following directions of a laser...
"I thought you would share ideals, I was mistaken. *None* of you comprehend tainted Dakittu of the mind. There's a shadow," Larosin looked patronising, observing with distaste tragic scenes. "See if the Master cares...!"

"Wace?! What is your Master?" demanded one of them, but Rosia refused to answer. No one moved.

"It can't end like this," sobbed Misako, halfway down on her knees. She was clutching the girl like a broken rag-doll, "Vixen, you have too much to live for. One of my earliest friends, since we were enrolled at Mecha-Lecka, remember? Then this happens, of all things... I should have realised then. Don't. don't-" Her voice trembled softly, "Don't give up on me."

Chapter 20: Wisful Vagrant

Officer Misako: Case of Amoresi

Author's Notes:
(Listening to Chrono Crusade's ending song, 'Sayonara Solitaire' and then The View's '*Over & Again'* while typing -
I also tried listening to the opening of *Kimi Ga Nozumu Eien* to get in the mood for writing the last chapter... And Fleetwood Mac's *Little Lies)*

Hi there readers... Long time no hear. I've been busy with study as usual. Well, this is it, the final chapter and then the epilogue is next. But I have a surprise, this is going to be my first fanfic with TWO endings instead of one! Another good news is that you'll find out what colour two of the character's eyes are, which two? I'm not telling. ;)
This is the 'official' ending which concludes the saga before the epilogue.
(but I haven't finished writing this yet, have to wait a few more weeks or something...)

The 'second-ending scenario' fanfic will be focusing on the planet Westion and possible new planets of MQ (including some I will make up, I couldn't resist). The theme is 'sometimes the easiest option doesn't necessary give the best outcomes'. Consquences of dark choices will affect the second timeline completely and time itself will start to unravel. Each chapter will be written in the POV of each character and it will be six chapters in length.

What did you think of that? Without further ado, here's the final chapter.

"- Now we cross over to other news, done by Lensflare and the sternful reporting team..." spoke a male voice, signalling rapidly. Laura Lensflare cleared her throat, whisking her aqua hip-length hair around, before launching into an exhiliariting account of the current dilemma faced by many. Miss Lensflare took ONE look at the report she had to give out and almost fainted at the length of the media report (about 4 pages in all).
'I have to speak for HOW long?!' mouthed Lensflare to the camera crew, who just sweat-dropped as they did a 'pan' and facepalm at the reporter...

"After the worst climatic, rather tenous showdown at Falcon-Reach Headquarters a few weeks ago - There were much debate and controversies being passed out soon after the scene. Word had broken out about the number of casualties endured on both sides of the factions. The SPD are inquiring into the vanishing miss Pascha Whirl, her clothes had been ripped apart and left at the crime scene, but there is no evidence of blood, fingerprints or any other residue left by the victim, so there seems to be a cold case at the moment. Kaede Maple and Kayo Regalis has returned back to the Uni"

"Shocking reality of the true nature of Amoresi's shadowy boss, Cain Standford Lupini the Third... had ensured criticism from eager adversaries. The majority claim that the Amoresi store was a setup for conspiratorial domination by squashing all economic opponents, such as Cinemech and Parma John's Pizzeria... There are even wild claims of how Cain had helped the misguided Marquis Therus on a quest for ultimate Immortality and was promoted for his assistance. But still after all this, other customers support the late Cain, saying that. A few are neutral and won't comment on the debate, dismissing it as balderdash. Such as miss Ballyhoo the elf, who declines to state her opinion on the entire affair."

"The arguments further worsened after the discovery that a notrious Shadowscythe agent was acting as an willing instrument. Apparently befriending several in the SPD, further evidence of her henious (and

shameful) doings and acts of depravition were accounted for... At the time working for the interests of the Shadowscythe, it soon became clear that someone from the SPD had caught her undivided attention."

"Resulting in double-crossing, brief flings (and other scandalous material) that won't be published here. This created yet more conflicts within the unit after her true role was demostrated, provided by several eyewitnesses on the team. It is apparent that there seems to be more to this theory though than <u>just the bare bones</u> (the pun is intended)."

"It's known that duties regarded by the agent became trival - compared to attention received when 'someone' noticed her... When her cover was blown, 'Superintendent' Larosin Fin-Schaets was last seen heading northwards on foot, chased by several of the best tracking Mechas and helicopters provided by the current King-President. It is believed she may have planned a quick detour during the sudden chase. This is because the regional sleuth has revealed the location of her vehicle, which was immediately 'confiscated as contraband' after the discovery. This agent may have the ability to impersonate others. If this caprious culprit was seen sometime, contact the Solunian authorities via either localised C-Mail or Véndræs.xom"

"Locals of Soluna and abroad were alarmed at the number of conspiracies, private organisations and coverups that had being hidden from the public eye for many months. Both Sir Cain Stanford Lupini and Lothreis Marquis, Therus have been brought forwards - with 21 totality charges of the various kinds of galatical crimes: Supermancy, intergalactic kidnapping and illegal bio-engineering and constructing AI robots. I bet the AI-judge is going to have a field day with these cases."
"Harlinique, the 'younger' brother of Therus, is deemed too dangerous to venture out right in the Soluna public - after many charges of assault, duress and other defenses. Harlin will be detained until further notice. The judge had complications when determining the actual age of Harlin and needed to be fixed by IPT specialists in the meantime..."

"I'm so sorry. To hear the *nausla*, about your friend." Diaglo's voice was completely broken from trying to hold back his intense emotions as he spoke to them. Devi looked simply unshaven, trying to cover his bloodshot eyes with a wretched expression on his face. He didn't speak for a few minutes, struggling to have coherence in his mind... Devi's saddened voice was extremely hoarse, after being in guilt for long. The stulos put a heavy claw on the sleuth's shoulder, Diaglo looked quite melancholy, dark hair framed by his ever glowing light-blue irises. No words were spoken. There was no need.
"I never asked her for forgiveness." Devi looked up skywards in remorse, "Do you think Lariat would still accept me?"
There was an awkward pause. Diaglo mused for a moment, succintly.
"*Yuastu.* I do not know, Devlin, I simply do not know." Diaglo added softly. Devi looked shattered once more, his face fell at the realisation. It seemed that since the news arrived, strangely the sleuth was the one most affected. Pearly tears dropped downwards, trickling slowly. It seemed to wash away all the emotion, releasing all of the pent-up sorrow.

Chapter 21: Ultima Transcendence

Officer Misako: Case of Amoresi

Epilogue: The 'Fourth Reset'
(Year: 8012.5 DL, Battleon Time: Armageddon)

Author's Notes:
If you don't like really, really weird plot-twists that changes everything that you know about my characters completely, or 1 chapter that involve the AQ/DF/MQ Universe imploding (re-merging) or even more unexpected mind-blowing paradoxes... I have 'a thing' for people with bicoloured eyes, Count D and Lucia (Venus VS Virus) Bitter-sweet romance and mind blowing action... Or concept of reincarnation, spiritual complexity or even the theme of memories, merging of weapons and second chances (reminds me of my fave anime NGE) or philosophy. - Don't read any further. If you do... ooh. You really want to? Slayer Seraphine and older Tetris return for the final time, and necromancer Trinenna and Duke Whirlwind...! (from my earlier fanfic if you must know)...

I find that symbolism is crucial to who understands the myths/legends surrounding water - water is of dual nature: it can be calming and flowing in rivers yet rushing and chaotic to those caught up in floods, it can give both life or death to those who wish so, depending on circumstances. Primordial life often arises from which water is found and it is an aspect of our existence which signifies cleansing and other cultural/religious aspects. I found it quite important, I'm quite a sucker for symbols. :D The hardest part was... Writing the hymns! AAARRRHH! The agony! Aiu! Alert: Prepare for a major headache trying to figure out the ending...! Everything does make sense... Eventually. I'll leave you guys to think over this ending for awhile.

(This is NOT FINISHED yet. wait a while, listening to Tsubasa OVA ending 'Last Fruit' and Utawaremo opening ^^)

The reset world has dragons, Mechas AND cool technology... As well as the return of a few familiar faces from Soluna and Battleon... And who's that new face amongst the crowd?! (evil laugh) But first, to **Blade100:** You rawk! Keep going. To **Satoshi-chan:** Thanks for the 'Sweet' review. **To Eyelovefantasy:** Cool! I'm glad you liked most of it. I love writing! Squeeee! **To XenoLord:** Keep readin' this, there are a few cool new twists in this story yet!

Important Note: It would be best if you listen to Dido's *'Thank You'* while reading this chapter, this song suits the mood of the chapter. :D Or even the opening theme to Revolutionary Girl Utena. ;) The second part would be *'Carry on Dancing*' by Savage Garden.

And now, for anger management from my outraged characters (Beckons to MQ and DF characters)
Vixen: (After reading epilogue) I think I'm going to sue you for this ending, SEVEN TIMES OVER! I might have to contact Warlic bout this. (dials Warlic's no. on phone) What did you think, Dean Warlic?! This sucks. Need to contact Psychic hot line
Devi: (reads fast and throws in waste paper bin) WACE?! That's most mind-blowing piece of firkin' (deleted for rude language) No wonder I don't like this conclusion! I truly, truly think this WRETCHED piece of information (deeet!) YOU OWE ME MY DEAR PASCHA! REALLY WANT MY SISTER BACK! (mumbles) Weird author. And resurrect Vixen too. I don't like my serious 'ttude, I want to be joking 'gain. Emo much?
Misako: (look at pages unemotionally) Tell me when you stop writing insufferable chapters for me to go through...

Electrocuted by Miss Jinitro, betrayed by Rosia, what next? How much more can I handle...? No wonder I'm emotional.
Larosin (Dragonfable): YOU JUST HAD TO SPOIL IT, DIDN'T YOU!! There goes my dragons-slaying career! (dumb fourth Reset) Why you ruin everything for us! (shakes the author) A good mind to send you to the Shadowscythe. (evil laugh)
Olapen (Dragonfable): Wait... I still don't get this ending. Still don't. (wow, Diaglo going out with us?) Why didn't Archmage Warlic make me his apprentice any more. (reads chapter 18) Why you made me so cruel?! (teary) nuuu... I'm sorry Koko.
Rayne (Dragonfable): WHY (musical) did you intend this fate for us...?! YAY! We got my blades back! (Everyone looks suicidally at Author with a scary look in their eyes)
Author: Artix's design notes (quotes) *Between AQ and AQW, an epic battle where Hero and Galanoth faced Dragon of Time -which ended... most unfavorably. Heroes were there... Even if they don't know, three time lines fused together... now a single true reality.* I think I'll teleport away so you can't hurt meeee... (teleports)

"Slayer Seraphine! Help us! I'm slipping!" screamed a mature Tetris as he strained against the rocky walls pushing with all his might. He wasn't as young as he was then, the vampire Lord felt nausea as waves of time-warping came at him. Time-Dragon bellowed, multi coloured scales glinting wickedly as it came. Chroton smiled with greed. Eyeing the mage, it roared with revenge, seeking calamity as it travelled upwards as a gecko. Its short tongue flickered as Galanoth swung the Axe.

PRICE MUST BE PAID, THE TIME-LINES MUST BE ADJOINED AND FOR THAT... I REQUIRE FRESH LIFE to be renewed once more. Chroton announced, *SOLUNIANS DONE IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO THE ETERNAL PASSAGE OF TIME.* Tetris looked panicked, glimpsing the cliff-edges, he yelped cowardly as the Dragon looked reptilian..
"Stop!" howled Seraphine loudly, revealing her Lycan form, "I command you!" Chroton paused in his task, whip lashing Galanoth in the process, who dropped his Axe and froze in place, like a statue. "Galanoth!" screamed Seraphine in despair, "Why did you freeze him, you hell-raiser?!" she accused the beast as it floated on its *Pillar of Thanriu,* roaring in delight...
The landscape - if it could even be called one- rose to dizzying and terrifying height, with mile-high rocks floating overhead a wracked swirling atmosphere. Occasionally a stray rock would

WHO ARE YOU TO QUESTION THE AVATAR OF TIME? TIME IS UNRELENTING, UNCEASING. UNSTOPPABLE... CAN YOU CONTROL THE STRANDS OF TIME, IMMORTAL HOPE? CAN YOU TELL TIME TO GO BACKWARDS AND RETREAT BACK TO ITS ORIGINS? NAY, FOR EVEN THAT ISN'T UNDER YOUR JURISDICTION. Chroton hissed. BECAUSE OF THE PROPHECY ULDOR HAD SPOKEN, ALL HAD CAME TRUE. BUT TIME IS A MANY-STRANDED WEB, UNRAVEL ONE TIMELINE AND THE REST SHALL UNRAVEL. I TELL YOU SLAYER, GO BACK WHENCE YOU CAME FROM.

"Not so fast." spoke up Seraphine, "As the Avatar of Hope, I could *willingly* terminate my own life just to save Battleon and the rest of the fractured universe, but Chroton, what about the rest of our civilisation and Time line? And the Heroes that fought despite the ravages of time? Surely they could be spared from your wrath. All I'm saying is choose your words wisely.
It seems a waste to disrupt time and sever all life along with it." Tetris looked startled, the Slayer doing all this?
Chroton laughed long and hard at this, his rainbow sides heaving with glee. He glared at them with interest, over looking them from its domain. Galanoth struggled to speak through clenched teeth, grunting with torture at every attempt.

ALL OF YOUR HEROES LONG BEEN VANQUISHED BY MY CLAWS, EXTINGUISHED LIKE A

CANDLE. THEY ALREADY LIVED OVER MANY GENERATIONS. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT I SHALL OBLIGE BY YOUR RULES?! snorted the large creature as the tail looped itself around a large uprooted tree. As Tetris watched from his somewhat awkward position, the large tree immediately withered away, its bark becoming papery and flakey. It took only a few seconds...

With that Seraphine pounced from a high place, charging hard as she humanely could. Snarling, the Lycan girl unsheathed her fangs as something moved... "Chroton! You destroyed reality, viciously slayed hundreds and sent everyone to the Netherworld! And for that, I weep." The Slayer announced after managing to dodge the spiked tail. Shattering suspended rocks in all directions, Chroton continue snarling statements as he searched for the speck. His third eye shifted.

SO- YOU THOUGHT I'M LESS SUPERIOR TO YOU, THAT I'M ONLY A MERE INSTRUMENT THAT ERODES LIFE. I'LL PROVE YOU INCORRECT. TIME IS NOT ONLY FUTILE, BUT FLEETING. HOWEVER DUE TO MY INNATE ARROGANCE... Moving quickly Seraphine precariously dangled over a wide chasm, swinging her body upwards in an effort. Tetris slid further down the rock, his fingers digging deep grooves in the rough callous surface. Already he was in a state of terror, frantically glancing at the Slayer. "Hurry up, Seraphine! What are you, a slowpoke?? I can't hold on much longer!" The mage's bat wings beat franticly.

Change took place, Chroton seemed to loom larger and more vicious, a fat slimy tongue over its lips. It spoke:
I SHALL RESTORE EVERYTHING... BY CREATING CHAOS, LET'S SAY, TO PROVE I AM INDEED BETTER THAN YOU. FOR TIME CAN CREATE. AN ORIGINAL UNIVERSE COMPRISED OF LOGIC - DEFYING THE VERY LAWS OF PHYSICS. Seraphine looked put out.
"Bite my slayin' yellow Dualight...!" she roared in a voice amidst her howls. Chroton sniffed. "I may not know what time does to an Avatar, but what I *do know* is limited!" confessed Seraphine, pulling her blood-soaked arrows. "This ends now! No decrees, no pleasing..." She stood to aim and fire at Chroton, who just snickered deeply. Waves licked at her very being...
SO BE IT, BUT I HAVE GODLY REFLEXES, EVEN FASTER THAN YOURS. BEHOLD. Her half-formed paws shook in pure terror.
She aimed to fire the arrow straight into the central torso.

Just then, at a rather unfortunate moment; "SERAPHINE! We've arrived to help the Avatar of Hope!" yelled Paladin Juan, teleporting in with some of Battleon's citizens. Poor Juan after all those years (almost 5 years) still had a cocky grin and he looked like battering and freshhh bruises everywhere on his face. His face looked a bit scruffy, with a slight roughened look and he wielded a broken silver mace. His build was a lot thicker. Seraphine's jaw nearly dropped to the ground at this.
As she watched, the slayin' arrow bounced off the cave wall and fell into the mists. Never seen again.

"OH MY GAWD!" screeched Seraphine, as she realised her opportunity was lost. "Of all times you interrupt my slayin'?! I thought Dagiteon roasted you on Ridgeback Mountain." Juan's face fell. "Did he get you?" Paladin Juan nodded then exposed his burnt back which smelt distinctly like roast Chicken-Cow. His flamin' hair was almost scorched to the roots... He had a sinister smile which showed missing teeth. "That's right, Seraphine." he said almost softly, "The Dragon of Chaos got me."

"Zerjicon!" remarked the Duke Whirlwind as he removed his mask, "That one giant Chroton!" Lilac eyes glinted with absolute sorrow. The Duke remembered all those years ago, he was having so much fun with his ancestor and himself was so naive about life. Now, it was as if he saw things for first time, time had a habit of passing quicker. *Was the world about to end??*
The Duke shuddered at this thought, pushing it aside. As he think, he pushed his greying hair backwards. Chroton's ability had an awful effect and the Duke was the first victim to succumb. Now he could never

regain his good-looks.
"Crush Chroton's skull, show him no mercy. For my *dekashir* youth!"

Trinenna snorted after hearing that, unlike him she was still young, but she STILL hated Chroton with a passion. What for? Other than the fact that Chroton controlled time. Oh yeah, and he stole her book of forbidden knowledge. Now that was what she couldn't forgive him for. The red Werepyre flapped her wings once before settling down on a rock. She held out her bracelet: "See that Chroton?!" she yelled defiantly, "It was given to me from my Soluna ancestor. She couldn't read it but I could! Do you know what it says?? Do YOU?" she challenged Chroton. No reply. "It says, *Time waits for ONE only*. Idiot."

Chroton's eyes blazed. AFFIRMED. TRULY DISAPPOINTED IN YOUR KIND. BATTLEON HAD NO REDEMPTION. AS FOR THE SLAYER, YOU LOST YOUR LAST CHANCE FOR THEIR BEHALF... DO YOU WANT AN APPEAL? IF NOT, I WILL RAGE AND DESTROY. YOU SHOULD SLAY ME WHEN YOU AUGHT. TOO BAD. Loud laughter. IF IT WASN'T FOR THEM, YOU WOULD WIN. MERGING THE UNIVERSE FROM SCRATCH. Seraphine wept, and so did Tetris in his anger.
A heart-breaking sight and a rare one. One this timeline would never see again.
Undead Juan held Trinenna with equally worried eyes as Artix screamed: "I told you DOOM was upon us all!"
"SHUT YOUR BIG YAP UP!" yelled Juan, furious, "Is that all you say?! Last words: We prevailed with Wasabi sauce!"
"I thought it was *slay the undead and destroy all Necromancers.* MY song." Artix responded.
"... Whatever. We're gonna crash and burn. Want to sing Celine Dion." Juan seethed. No replies.

"I lost," Seraphine whispered, losing confidence. "I have brought dishonour." She longed for Tetris's touch. But...
Glimmers of radiation poured from Chroton's mouth as its eyes gleamed with hell-fire. Vampire-Lord Tetris felt the vertigo of falling, endless falling through space. "For Lore." he yelled, "For this universe. SERAPHINE! SERAPHHIIIINNNEE!"
Uldor was wrong, he realised. He never find true love, and he would never be slayed by Seraphine (Hopefully). Ever again.
A searing wave as the impact of Chroton's attack exploded with the force of three nova suns.
Light, fire, earth, water and ice - all the elements - clashed as one.
The last thing anyone saw before their time line collapsed was confusion and chaos descending upon a destroyed LORE.
And it was a rather painful experience, let me tell you that.

Year: 8013 After Lore. Location: near the Swordhaven castle

While this was happening, the new ruler of Swordhaven groaned as he looked upon the town. King Alteon turned to Seraphine. "I don't know how this happened."
They were in a foyer reproduced with both new and ancient technology, it gleamed with shinyness. Wires stuck out.
The Slayer shook her head wearily, she and all the Battleon people survived the merge. Including Tetris, Duke Whirlwind and Trinenna. But Juan... Did not survive. She had never seen Soluna people before, but loss of her half-cousin - pained her.

Glaring, the human girl turned against Trinenna. "It's your fault! If you never insulted Chroton then we won!"
"I blame your Paladin cousin for singing Celine Dion," Snarling, Seraphine lunged at the necromancer... *"Take that back you indecent Werepyre!"* The Lycan girl yelled, clawing at the other's face in an attempt to wound.

"No, technically it was the Duke's fault!" Robina added, slinging her arrows of misfortune. the Duke yelled at this.
"*Hasbro!* DON'T BLAME ME for something I didn't do!" the Duke added, back to his former young self.

"Will you guys get a grip!" screamed Tetris, "It was all our fault." For once, Tetris made sense. The two squabbling girls looked very angry at each other, panting after their fierce argument. Seraphine was enraged, more than ever. Then she took one glance at what Juan left her: Part of his ancient mace. The immortal Slayer just sat on her haunches, just weeping.
"That's the... First weapon my decent half-brother was given by Artrix... I never expected him to survive that 500 feet fall in that deadly volcano, much less even become Undead. Irony, I was so sure Dagiteon had vaporised him. How can we live like this?" she questioned. "I never got to tell him anything before Chroton arrived. This so-called immortality has become a curse: why I am Forsaken." No one had a say to that long speech. King Alteon paused before returning to the window.

"Life is but a walking shadow, and all this world's a stage." quoted Mithlos, arriving in his new garbs, he was carrying a paper scroll. He paused, looking at new people in Swordhaven, "Huh?! I never expected company." Mithlos winked.
"Aren't you from... Soluna?" asked Tetris, putting a large hand around the Alvenos. "I've seen you before." He paled.
"I don't understand," stuttered Mithlos uncertainly, "Were you strangers round from here?" Alteon nodded at them.
"We were perceived," replied Seraphine, dusting off her cloak, "Hence everyone was connected through time,"

Mithlos handed the monarch the letter. The Slayer looked at the group which had stuck together during hardships. She owed them everything, they had supported her through every aspect of each region, she had ventured through the depths of magic arcane. Experienced and yet unchallenged, the bringer of change. And yet she knew that her presence had wrought destruction of every kind, historical, societal and civil. All because of a forbidden love, lust that should never be rekindled. To top it off, Juan killed by Chroton. Maybe it was time to leave for good.
"I must leave," She got up to exit the foyer, but Tetris snatched her hand and held it.
The mage looked pitiful and simple. How she missed that, now a lord was reduced to tears at the sight...
"Don't leave, Seraphine." Tetris begged, "You're innocent, he's practically undead anyway." The Lord mused at her Lycan form.
"I just need to think, mull things over. I need time. To contemplate, things I regretted, a forbidden affair. Farewell, in due time." She took one last look at everyone, Vampire-lord stepped aside in due respect to the Slayer.

It was final, last image anyone saw of Seraphine was of her Lycan form near the woods. It took only a blink of an eye, it seemed as if she was dashing into the woods. People would talk of the woods. 'The fresh wind' would whisper of one who Slayed but never showed her face. A guardian of Willow Creek and a legend. Still others said that she was exploring, but rumours were rumours. All anyone knew was that she had left, a heroine amongst Swordhaven.

Months passed by, things continued on as normal. The sound of fighting and triumphed screams filled the air as more people from past time lines arrived, it was a routine which everyone was used to. Gradually, it seemed it was always that way, shops soon appeared and the civilisation grew larger, into a community of bustling explorers, eager to see the world and its boundaries. It seemed as there was no limit to the wonders of the world's creation.

Suddenly out of nowhere, they appeared. Some of the former citizens of Soluna. And they were confused. Majorly confused! "What the freaking Kelf happened!" yelled a random Soluna person, running through the

cobbled streets and staring. A white dragon landed on the mecha and started gnawing it like a bone "That's gonna cost you 3000 credits!"
"MY eyes, my hell-filled eyes! The light, the bright green light!" yelled Sally Coffronze, in a warrior's uniform.
"Dragons! I see extinct dragons!" yelled Mithlos in a skirt during *the Seventh Sense* hologram, "AAAHHH!"
"Don't tell me those... whatever, invaded new towns." Baron's eye twitched as thousands of Mechas arrived in full platoon...
"Aw," spoke up Quentin, seeing something cute and hugging it, "Who's a good monster." The Deery instantly morphed and Quentin backed away as a freaky skeleton deer stared her in the eye. "Uhhhh... Dean Warlic, RUN!"
Everyone was... Horrified and amazed at this: One minute, staring at their desks and fighting sneevils, a second later, they were in the middle of a strange town with dragons, weird weapons and deadly machines at their heels... Awful.

Solunians ran around with their mechas and shooting <u>everything</u> in sight, warriors were confused as monsters they never saw before attacked them. the end-result was total chaos for three weeks. Of course, everyone had to adapt. And learn the changes in their now surreal lives. Life was chaotic, but it was a lively chaotic, they were lulled into a false sense of security...

That was until one life-changing event challenged everything.

"Where the heck are you Alvenos doing in my smithery?!" yelled Diaglo as four Adventurers stormed through the town - right in the middle of the night. They shot him a dark look, snickering with mischief. Clearly up to something. *SMASH!* A pair of copper tongs were tossed aside. One of them drunkenly upended a battle-axe, it fell and nearly broke to pieces. "Oh firking damnation! Damn you adventurers! *Resuti* Solunians were WAY more disaplined than you lot!" Diaglo swore as they vandalised the entire store. At once, a swooping rough hand grasped him by the neck and wrung it. The alien gasped as the hand revealed itself - to belong to a graceful slender male elf.

Winged soldier of white and Moglin-head person grinned in the faltering moonlight. As Stryker stepped through the ivory door, Diaglo scowled. Not him again, was this some PAYBACK for Soluna incident? *But that* Arkento *was exactly 'Lorithia-knows how long ago, over 5000 years.'* Stryker seemed eager to rub even more insults into Diaglo's face. After all, he waited five millenniums for this to occur, <u>way</u> too long for his liking. This was the PERFECT opportunity for his revenge, and with the police 'out of the picture' as well as that Wolfblade Oeyken being long deceased, he was unstoppable! *Muhahaha, Diaglo will pay,* he thought maniacally, *wishes he had never stepped in this hovel!*

"Yeah? And wace EXACTLY are you going to do, fool?" asked the leader, prying Diaglo's arms apart with the iron wrench. The young blacksmith fell to the stone ground where the Elf punted him. "Buldrut Keep, don't play hardcore with any firk Earth Thief Skulls." Stryker continued, Diaglo just groaned in shock. The Alvenos laughed, mocking him. "What's the poor Alvenos baby's gonna do? Eh? Eh? Run back to black Marsh cesspit? Like a featherless Cow-chicken. Daggy Diaglo, I don't forget anything - Especially AFTER seeming 5000 years of stuck. In. A. Neverending. KELF-HOLE!" The enraged Alvenos screamed, "We have a score to settle! Now." His shadow was long and menacing as he slammed a hand on the counter.
"I am fairly certain you fools are after the Necrominon book. Correct Kyratistu?" The elf nodded, clearly understanding. "Just like old times, eh Diaglo? Just you, me... and a huge blade the size of your firkin' head." Tail wrapping around Stryker's heel, Diaglo jerked it and the Alvenos fell.

The blade spun as they gasped. *SLASH!* Diaglo rolled as the sword thudded, narrowly missing his chest. Stryker swore loudly, grasping his head, "That went too far, you *Rateyui*! Seize him!" he bellowed at his

henchmen, "You blind as well as mute?! We have to report to our base, Swordfall!"
The henchmen hurriedly obeyed him, dashing through the forest as they swept through bushes with their huge silver scythes.
The twin moons in the sky gave just enough light to see his destination, a desolate temple. Zard-men roared in confusion, tails shaking the ground as Diaglo attempted to outrun his captors. Near impossible as the light gave no protection from the pursuit.
"You can't run forever, *Kadomitri*!" The Moglin-head warrior squeaked, "This is OVERKELF!" In a fleeting moment, Diaglo fell forwards. His backpack burst open, revealing the very item he vowed to prevent harm to. "OH SHIIKASE!" he groaned as he saw events unfold.

Stryker led the charge with his Water-Draconian sword, whose cold burning light swept through the undergrowth. The Alvenos blacksmith had to duck as the animate watery blade sliced through a thick tree with liquid ease. The tree branch toppled forwards, missing Diaglo by a couple of inches. Curling tail once more around splintered wood the Alvenos hesitated, tossing the object at Kyratistu as one might throw javelins. Then he ran in fear, Stryker's arm... had fused with the very weapon he held, aloft with the slightest touch. *How in Kaesyra did this happen?* Diaglo thought apprehensively, what kind of dark Force created this fusion?! Stryker's eyes glowed with a tint of mauve, form becoming distinctly blurred. Smoke steamed from the evil Alvenos's nose, as Diaglo realised... realised that the disturbed forest was a dead-end.

"It ends now, Diaglo." Stryker said in monotone, lurching forwards with an eager grin. "Now, hand me that item - so precious and vital to sustain our empire we are building - our anarchy shall rule supreme. First thing in order: Removing that firking tail of yours." Pushing a lock of chestnut hair aside, clear sweat glistening in the pallour of the moon, the blue rippling sword crackling with a light never seen since Soluna. The priestess coming out of Greenguard temple paled with anxiety when she saw the very sight, biting her knuckles until it drew blood.
"No," the Blacksmith yelled raggedly as the four moved closer, "NO! *Faluken* shall avenge me!" Diaglo inched back with suspicion, the unbalanced Alvenos mirroring his very movements. Pressing the vorpal blade against pale flesh, Stryker prepared to move in for the kill. Drawing back the serrated sword to aim... "Chaaarrge!" he screamed. The words echoed around the forest, filled with a silent rage, ever rising in violent crescendo. Unknownst to both of them, an unnatural occurrence was about to happen in that instant. And happen, it did.

In those skies above an otherworldly glowing comet lit up the heavens, streaking towards its destination and threw a white brilliance. The light was enough to distract the male from his task, shielding himself against the sparkling rays. Every other adventurers to the vicinity looked upwards in amazement. It instantly flared up and suddenly headed towards the ground, throwing fine cosmic dust within two-metre radius. Luckily enough they weren't SO close to the comet to cause instant incineration. That would be nasty.
"Hurg-hur, fir-king phe-nomena!" Stryker coughed violently as he inhale soil and smoke that fumed up. He was gagging so hard that not even Diaglo noticed subtle signs occurring around them. Which was too bad, as the blacksmith nearly passed out during the whole event. It was too much even for him to wonder at. The two looked strangely at the surface, impossible. Then one soon crashed to the ground, overwhelmed.

As he looked through blurred eyes, Diaglo felt someone rummage around his pockets with rough hands. *Yawa Moglin-head!* He shoved the Alvenos aside. Instantly the Priestess screamed, the sunken lady falling to her knees. It was though she sensed something the others couldn't. And they were right in a way, too accurate. Alas, none could feel the pulse illuminating from the very core of Swordhaven. An event that send shock waves throughout the renewed time line. If the Priestess could put her actions into words, she would describe the disturbance of the elements, ever-shifting and contorting. She saw unexplainable flashes of nightmarish bony dragons, flames of blood-red and... that reigned over all.

They felt the ground heat up, feeling it radiate through their feet, slightly warming. The smooth rock beneath pulsated, shaking the Moglin-warrior prised the item with trembling hands. The Moglin-head

laughed with merciless sounds echoing everywhere. "The night is ours!" boomed Monetri with malice, "We have the vessel! Swordfall's victory is ENSURED! Hear me! ENSURED!" He taunted constantly. "It's all thanks to you, W*atnos* blacksmith."
"Wace, about his tail, it's like a third hand to him." Monetri turned to Stryker. His grin widened, "No use. Might as well be space-loot. Finish the Alvenos!" Stryker roared. Draconian sword was raised higher, glinting and ready to plunge. Diaglo waited for the inconceivable, waited for the strike that would send him... *Waited.* He felt the dryness well up in his throat. But the blow never came, he was so puzzled. *Surely?*

"Unhand that sword! Thou render your blades above yet another life!" Another voice yelled, familiar and yet so different... *How? Wace? WACE?!* Stryker's very face paled at the sound, looked as though he lost strength to even move, "How CAN THAT BE?! What are you?" he responded faintly. Diaglo turned around slowly to face the speaker and confirm who was talking. It wasn't anything he expected, seeing a tall figure standing there, aura blazing around the area like wildfire. The person was wearing a Gargoyle mask which hid facial features. But that alone wasn't the only thing. This was impossible, noticing the colour of the eyes for a first time. One pupil was aquamarine like the depths of the ocean, the other was a bright silver. Silver. This presence was familiar. Too familiar. The blacksmith raised his hand towards the figure in vain.

"If you prize your blade above life, then *you* shouldn't be asking that question," responded the wraith "Life transcends beyond what others see."
Stryker winced at this, levelling the sword at the person. "If you have truly seen beyond, then I care not." he scowled, "Lest our swords clash then burn with rolling thunders of the Valkyries." His eyes burned with an insatiable anger. They charged towards the figure with a fury.

They wasted no time as such was their hatred. All three henchmen raised their weapons as one. *"Dance of the Dexterous Falcon"* Stryker hissed, running straight at the figure, he didn't care any more about Diaglo. All he wanted was to defeat the masked person right in front of him. The one that prevented him taking the vessel. That was all he could see. Diaglo watched as he saw the battle as if distanced from the action, the storm was growing nearer. *"Platinum Whirlwind."* ordered Kyratisu, the elf was too excited from the adrenaline of battle, not thinking before he shouted out the command, it was too late. The attack was unleashed from the elf's hand and Stryker screamed as something awful and final had happened. He heard a terrible ripping sound as the fused blade was ripped from his flesh. The Alvenos let go of a hand that was no longer there, he glanced at his phantom hand in horror. The pieces of his merged hand lay metres away, covered in congealed blood and trickling. No longer could he slay Diaglo, or tie on armour. "Kyratsu you jerk!" he screamed until his deep voice was raw. "Look what you've *firking* done!" They were distracted by everything, so they never saw it coming. Never noticed the final command their opponent gave out.

"Melancholy Tome's Fang." With widened eyes, Diaglo watched as the contents of thieves bag pack bulged then split open at the seams. Loot poured out endlessly, piling onto the soil. Too scared to move a finger towards their assaulter, who smiled quietly. Goblets, bronze jewellery, helms, velvet clothes of upper class and finally, the glinting vessel of Swordhaven. "Go back to Swordfall, Stryker. Tell your *Dakittu* master that I returned... For vengeance." Without a word and much shaken, Stryker nursed his arm and ordered his henchmen back. They vanished into the darkness, running for their lives. Once they were gone, Diaglo's lips quivered, this person had just rescued him from the Alvenos... *But who was? No, it was impossible, nothing made sense...* As his head ached with those thoughts, the figure slipped back into the shadows. "Be safe."
"But, are you?" asked Diaglo, "I thought you vanished years ago?" Silence answered as Diaglo collapsed, seeing stars.

"I'm telling you," Diaglo took a deep breath and sighed amidst the laughter of the crowd, "I haven't gone insane, look- anyone believe me don't you?!" he yelled at Trinenna pleadingly as she polished her weaponry. Valencia cocked her head in surprise. "I was not the only witness! Ask the Priestess of the

forest!" His silvery Snake tail was writing rapidly everything he knew about these events. Blank faces.
"So you're expecting us to believe all that gloom?" questioned Trinenna sceptically, 'First I lost my Necro powers - now you're saying the same comet we saw last night hit the Forest at the very moment three thieves from your era stole your vessel which is sacred?! How did you manage to survive such an event without getting seriously hurt by the impact? Plus, as all seemed lost for poor Diablo, a 'masked' figure came along with two-coloured eyes and saved you? From those three Alvo- whatis?" She shook her head, doubting the Solunian blacksmith's sanity.

"Yeah, I don't get it myself, the events don't add up right." admitted Diaglo, "But why were they connected? The vessel and the stranger?" He heard their loud laughs. Everyone was joking, but didn't they understand? Didn't anyone knew? Plus, who in the Reset had bicoloured eyes? At least every Swordhaven citizen had their valuables returned with not so much as a scuffle. Most of them thanked him profusely in gratitude, fawning on their items deemed lost forever. People of Swordhaven had no idea how close they came to losing everything, even the glorious vessel of Swordhaven. Peasants and warriors asked too often how Diaglo retrieved the items from thieves with a lean physique such as his, but the poor simple Blacksmith had no reply. As they looked in confusion, Diaglo winked at them, a slight sparkle in his eyes as his silvery tail twirled.

"Actually," began Artix, "I did see something. Or someone." Everyone looked up. Artix nodded slightly, before pulling out something from his armour. A thick book with a symbol of a grey tentacled eye on it. It was padlocked securely. Diaglo stared with shock until everyone thought his eyes would drop out. No one could believe it, there it was. And this forsaken item was the only unique one found... For now.

"The Lore Grimoire, book of Lore which contains Chaos Realm?! Upon which the one who looks into this realm shall fall to depths of gloom and insanity?" Trinenna whispered, looking at Artix with renewed interest and respect. "How did you manage to obtain this?" Artix just smiled, putting a finger to his lips with quivering fear. Tetris kept away from the Grimoire as though he was scared of its mere conception, the pages started to smoke. "I found this blasted artefact in the Forest, right in the comet's core." The Paladin explained coolly. "It might explain everything since Swordhaven, but I daren't not risk my sanity by opening it." The others backed away from the Lore Grimoire inching away from it in fear.
"But..." began Diaglo, "Will it explain anything worth knowing to the user? Answer any questions?"
Trinenna shook her head.
"Do not be tempted by such notions of grandeur, lest others become devoured by its brilliance and intensity of omnipotence. It's doom to those who resist this and not heed." Trinenna spoke calmly, "I was such a one to open a book such as this in days of my youth and it consumed me so. Reduced my very soul to cinders, it did." Diaglo nodded, but his eyes were dewy with tears as he blinked them back.

'Unless already thou accepted this descent, how can you accept defeat? Mortality's own shortcomings bound you and still others to those nether-regions.' indicated a disembodied rattling voice, chasitating someone who remained shackled to those misty surroundings. Dense and opulent smoke drifted lazily. It swirled amongst eerie surroundings of the two figures, one of which seemed indescribable to mortal eyes alone. The only thing apparent to those eyes were intensities of throbbing darkened lights, which faded in and out with startling regularity. The glittering throne which seated the figure was immense, ghastly symbols carved into the marble-like surface. Dark objects clanged as they rose up of their own accord, the 'person' questioned seemed to struggle. lifting eyes of desperation as those others protested. *"SILENCE YE!"* commanded the terrifying One which interrogated. At once, there was a cracking noise and all those other weeping voices in the dismal background fell silent.

'Tell me, brave one, those boundaries which fullness of those lifespans required, is there anything more sacrificial demanded of them?' More silence, but there was denial. *'I thought so, mortals are yet to comprehend true inner nature of that which bounds them to those damned regions. It is those own failures*

that prevent ascension, but those are different matters.' The One 'crouched down' on its short forelegs towards the spirit, *'And yet you still mourn.'* it added gently. As wafts of plumed smoke drifted, the fallen person wiped tears from her eyes. The look was pleading and the One turned away, a grimace on its strange face. It still listened to those begging whispers sounding out though, its ears twisting forwards.

"It was only failures to prevent the ones I loved from a web of deceit that anguishes me so, and determinism. And so to escape those invaders of Soluna, I decided on the best course of action. Why do you ask me?" Those chains of darkened light tightened and the spirit winced with inhibited pain. The One spoke with a fierce voice of rushing thunder.

'One of those hourglasses was smashed. Your life cut all too short, a spark of brilliance that faded, others must been confused at this event, I heard their cries as the war ended. Because it is known that you somehow reappeared in the realms of the Reset. In a recreated form. Yet still bound to this elemental dimension, so you had to return.' pressed on the One. She paled and waited, the chains felt heavy upon her form. The creature stretched out its inhumanly hard claws, *'I can see the determined look in your eyes, only ones with unnaturally strong will returns to that world of solids. You have lived but three aeons in this realm. I feel your task in that lifespan was left unfulfilled. As it was my duty, an option to return to a life glimpsed, but not as you knew it.'* Her eyes widened with joy.

'You were one of many heroines, I heard those cries and answered with justice. However-' the voice lowered...
'In order to exist in the Reset, someone else must volunteer to discard their remnants. It's only natural,' he replied to the spirit's shocked reaction, *'Willpower alone does not stabilise the trip back, also mana is required even if it belongs to another. This is the decree that ordains the galaxy.'* The One finished its speech and many voices wailed louder in response. No one else wanted to volunteer and the one enchained felt disheartened. Suddenly there was a wisp of smoke entered from nowhere as it appeared and reformed. The One stepped back as another answered the question on everyone's lips:

'You saved my life, and so I felt indebted to return the favour.' the other whispered, *'I do not regret my decision, for my time was well earned with Alex the Dragonlord.'* Silver eyes glanced out as the other spirit with blue cloak helped the fallen one up. *'My conscience told me otherwise, but I wanted to perform this. Even if I myself wouldn't exist without mana, would literally fade away due to this process, I will lend then transfer my strength to you. We mages call it 'transmutation', the highest order of arcane magic there is.'* A wry smile. *'That's my way of thanking you.'*

The chains of shining light encircled the darkened spirit flickered once then dissolved, evaporated into thin smoke. The One nodded almost in approval. *'So, how long have you been here for?'* asked the now-unchained spirit, gratitude at finally being released from the bounds... The other seemed to blink momentarily, startled by those unrequited questions the spirit now sought. She turned away as if reminiscing past events, the pained expression etched was rendered demure. It was as though secretly ashamed at this, running a hand through those rippling colours. Then there was a reply after some endless time.
'A few years or so, I kinda lost count after a while... It seems as though it was just yesterday, but I did not expect that the misfortune would take entirely a moment... I should have practised more sleet of hand and advanced alchemy with Archmage Warlic. Time seems to run way slower in this realm, like the passing hours don't really exist.' replied the other gratefully, reaching out to her.

The One snorted in contempt at this, eye unfurling as it stared at the two vespers in utter disbelief at the scene:
'Over two years,' it growled beastly, claw over spiked foreleg, as it glanced at shattered remainders of those Lorian Avatars.
'Really, I swear it seemed to be longer. Time is deceptive here. Thus I digress.' she muttered to herself,

before facing Misako, *'Are you certain you want to proceed?'* the other spirit's glassy-blue eyes started watering in sadness at this statement.

'But if we proceed with this, you'll not exist any more in this realm or anywhere else, that's too much... Isn't that too big a sacrifice to make? All I wanted was to assist my remaining friends, to return to them once again and prevail against the incoming Dakittu of Swordfall. I could see Diaglo's pained expression as Stryker saw me, as if he recognised the form I took, life is still worth protecting at least to me, and it should also matter to you... I'm pretty sure they all missed me so, Sally, Diaglo, Quentin and the other Alvenos, don't know if they still do, or still remember. If they truly changed over the years and the state the world is now in since I last came across them...' Misako trailed off.

The other smiled rather sadly and nonchalantly at this, *'Nothing really fazes or surprises me any more, not when I'm literally being around for over 5,020 years. Well, I've had a lot of time to think about this, that's all.'* she responded to Misako's rather surprised reaction. *'... what's with the surprised look?'* she asked sceptically as she was adjusting her cloak.
'... Nothing.' Misako said, avoiding the look Olapen gave her, *'You've changed a lot over those years, if now unexpected opportunities arose from such circumstances, I'm sad to say... Full of regret that I didn't live to see the Reset.'*
'There's nothing more important than protecting your friends, the fact that you pursue this is admirable.' Olapen replied, *'I have no doubt that you achieve your final mission in due time, no matter how long it takes.'*

'This realm is considered to be the most chaotic - 'Era of the last of Heroes', the Fourth age and the darkest hours that all Lorians have ever seen. Reclaim thou dignity in next realm and thou remember thus: this is thou last lifespan, Misako Irwa. Once you're committed to the ideologies of this realm, there's no return to the past that you have ventured through destiny. The outer realm had changed immensely, and thou shall start anew like a flower in blossom... Thou must seek thou own path, which intertwines with others yet unseen.' the One explained, glancing at the two, *'Though despair and hardships fade away, the last of heroes still remains to fight for unbridled justice. Will you be that Heroine?'* Misako hesitated, wiping back sweat which threatened to spill. Finally, she nodded with somewhat timid movement. *'Your slate shall be wiped clean. Then accept thou destiny and arise as a dawn star.'*

Olapen also blinked back tears which filmed over her silvery eyes. *'I'm really glad our paths crossed that day,'* Misako was at loss at what to say, glancing at the hooded figure. Foreboding light seemed to stream through both their forms, casting a mood of overwhelming nostalgia that seemed to fill the otherworldly realm. Silence reigned as the One watched over all.

'You're not afraid?' Misako asked quietly in both awe and veiled intrigue at the lightning mage. Olapen flinched at this as she stood.
'Scared of what?' The other stated inanely, deliberately avoiding the undeniable question that Misako sought, but still restrained with undercurrents of dark emotion... *'Okay, you caught me. Of course, you think I'm immune to being anxious half the time?'* She stood at the metal altar which arched, solemnly gazing at the distant fire-stars which glittered amongst the swirling mists. They seemed to twinkle with loneliness.
'You have no idea what I've been through...' she stated melancholy, eyes staring off into the distance. The other's expression was purely unreadable and bitter.

'... I'm sorry, I apologise Miss Jinitro.' Misako bowed towards the mage. *'I can understand if I hurt your feelings. You don't have to go through with this.'* The Oeyken offered her hand in friendship and the mage accepted the gesture. The bronze-and-topaz stone altar had a sheen of its own, the metal reflected through the mists... The vision of the lone jewelled altar was reflected in their eyes.
'My last name's Jintas. But the name still sounds familiar, was that what I was called in a former life before the Reset?' Misako nods as the other looked a bit confused, trying to remember what happened before the

Reset. *'I don't want to be hurt by people's actions any more...'* Olapen replied in a lost voice, it was unnerving the mage to be filled with so much angst. It sounded hollow.

'Jinitro...' Misako stretched her flickering hand out, *'I may not be able to help, but.. you can still depend on your friends. I'm here for you, I'll always remember you as you were.'* The green-haired Oeyken knelt, still clutching the slender hand of the weeping lady.
'Maybe then I could attain peace that way, knowing that in this way I'll be free.' The mage commented softly before commencing.
A molten dark blue glow filled the altar draining whatever darkness was hidden within the murky mists. The beam of the source concentrated before slowing down into a flickering spherical shape which glowed with applied inner energy. Misako caught the spherical shaped 'object' before it seemed to give a rapid spark and flowed into the transparent hand. *'feel so cold and weakened... Thank you, I appreciate being listened to. Think as it as my gift for you, Koko... the gift of your redemption.'* A final smile.

'Please, don't leave...' Koko tried to catch the falling mage. The prone form dispersed into glowing crystalline stars which flickered away as soon as Misako touched them. The hooded robes fluttered downwards and was caught on something, it laid on the altar of Topaz lone and devoid of its previous owner. *'... Jintas!'* Misako said raggedly, noticing her hands still glowing. The One still watched.
'Are you ready for your respawn?' the One asked coldly. Even now as she felt renewed, she lifted up her shaking hand in gratitude.
'Yes I am ready, I'll complete my mission.' Misako said in single resolution, muscling some of her bravery. Closing her eyes, she wished with all her might-

RESPAWN.

The fisherman cast his rod as he looked over the horizon of the overflowing river. He enjoyed catching those monstrous Flying Fish and reeling them out of rushing white froths. Ever since the huge storm last night, everyone had reported seeing strange flashes of light. Ah well, they must have been fireflies or something. He swatted a huge pesky mozzie away from his face as he spotted another bluish light 'respawn' near shores of the tiny river. *But this respawn was in the wrong place, who in their right mind-?* His heart almost stopped when he saw the impossible. There was really was a strange lady emerging from flowing depths, clothes intact but soaked. The fisherman dropped his rod in amazement, bucket of fish splashing as it rolled into the river. He didn't pick it up.
"Eh?" he breathed roughly as the lass ignored him. She looked like a river spirit, lank hair dripping salt water.

"What in hell? Where did she come from?" yelled an adventurer. Other warriors just gaped, before offering to help.
"That is impossible? Where you going, young lady?" said a scientific warrior, despite seeing it in front of his eyes. They gasped as she raised her head, showing her eye colours for the second time. Silver and aquamarine, they fell silent. Dark hair seemed to shimmer as it flowed past her shoulders. She seemed unaware of their reaction at first. Their eyes tracked her as she limped tiredly towards the Inn which Yuglar used to forge new equipment, footprints imprinted on the soft gritty sand...

"They said a strange girl washed ashore," replied Robina, her hand upon the tablecloth. "The fishers can't really describe her. I don't know what to make of this news." Yuglar had just finished for the day, so there weren't many customers at the reopened inn. Leaving some rooms vacant for available visitors. Everyone was either away or thwacking skeletons on the head this steamy afternoon. So no visitor noticed the new visitor request for a vacant room. Puzzled by the visitor's appearance, Yuglar nevertheless gave her the bronze key to a resided room.
"You look sorta familiar, gal." he told the lady as she exited to the locked room to 'undress'.

Night fell as Sally Coffronze stumbled into the Inn rather inebriated after partying all day with Swordhaven's citizens. With her sword clanging against her side, she found the door padlocked to her utter dismay. "Hey! Yuglar why da firkin' hell is da hotel door locked?" Sally demanded as she swayed. "Whomsoever in there, I thus demand mooora room service! And a daiquiri for tabs!" She kicked the door, "JUST let Salsa in, DAMMIT!" The Soluna warrior swore with a hollering whoop. She crashed into the door, with a loud shatter, Yuglar just wished Sally would have more common-sense and use the windows for a change.
"Use the window, doofus!" Yuglar bellowed, "These doors aren't automatic as Soluna! And it is rude to interrupt early guests."
"Wace, guest is in there without my permission and ya lent damn keys when I wasn't there!" Sally roared.

"You're so melodramatic about everything?!" Yuglar yelled at Sally, "Listen you, come back in the morning. Nice and early!"

"Da morning?! Firking, damning constellation!" Sally glared with blood-shot eyes before carving a giant hole in the door, "Wanna sleep, don't even care about etiquette." She muttered as she saw armour and clothes strewn messily on the floor. "... Damn." Sally's eyes widened at the mess. "Don't tell me I have to clean up after them." As she was about to pick up those clothes, she noticed the guest snoozing under the quilt on the unmade bed. The lady's silken hair reached past shoulder-length, such a tinted pastel emerald colour it was almost dark... decorated by ribbons and worn in a rather simple style. Sally stared at the colours, stroking the flowing strands of curls in curiousity. It was then she saw it, a slash of red upon one closed eye. The warrior would recognise the scar anywhere, it was like a slap in the face. But could it be really-?

"Ah... Impossible," she murmured in utter amazement, "Misako? Is thus an illusion come to haunt me?" the warrior added softly in disbelief, "Mourning for you so much during the Solunian war, but returning when our hopes were finally lost after Dagiteon arrived?" Sally wished she was still reporting as in her youth, but as Sally left the room she informed Yuglar and the others. It was so silent you could hear a pin drop. But there were several cries of 'WHAT?' and 'Wace?!' outside the room as they realised the truth.

"... Melkior?" asked Landon meekly, still in incredulity after several weeks. "You're still my sister, sort of." He said with a rather confused gaze, "But when did you insist on wearing black leather jackets? That weird... Elaborate stave you purchased from 'Murray'? Having this Moglin as your pet? Thought you disliked those Soluna robot-Moglins. You would jump off my Starship than admit liking it. Yelled at me to shoo away the scamp I loosed in your suite on Mogloween. You hated that day," Landon grinned at memories. His eyes had dark circles underneath and his tinged hands were grey. "Furious back then, young as we were. Running round until I finally pranced on it. Tears running down that adorable lil' face, such a cry-baby, more-so a loud whiner. More than I thought possible, alas people change." Melkior sighed a bit at this, tracing the leather fabric innocuously as Chilebé chirped eagerly. She heard Landon's musings but just commented that she 'had an affinity for black' though she didn't know why.

"I thought you'll go drinking, always leaving me at the Uni while you flunked epically," Melkior answered as Landon looked very sober.
"Dean Warlic told me off for procrastination. After news of your disappearance, I stopped." Landon replied gruffly, "Just wasn't the same, without you looking disapprovingly-" Melkior just looked concerned, "Yeah, just like that. You still miss Vixen by any chance?" She tiny Frostvale moglin meeped on the table as Landon saw the other items laid out that his sister purchased. Most of them were costumes he never imagined wearing. "Don't worry, I'll still love you no matter what," he sighed, spotting an Lolosia pirate suit amongst the weapons. "Even if Kior herself refuses to admit it. After all, I had to deal with heart-rendering-
"

Tetris trooped into the room, seeing the commotion. Landon greeted the dumb vampire mage. Before noticing Diaglo, Sally, Kayo, Kaede, Quentin, Alexander Drufus and Mithlos. Trinenna was thankfully not present, away fighting with Alex the Dragonlord instead. "Got any business with Kior-sama?" he added roughly to either party. Tetris just flapped to the rafter and slept on it. Mithlos peeked shyly at Melkior's new body while Diaglo just nodded curtly. Quentin fainted, Kayo and Kaede looked weird for a moment, trying to process what the heck happened. Alexander Drufus just said, "Did you do something with the Potara Earrings?" *Kri, kree, kiki, Chiii ba, kree, Kriiiii!* Chilebé spoke happily.

"Misako! We all missed you soooo," Kaede launched herself at Melkior, tackling her in the process. "You have no idea how long we'vebeenwaitingforyou to return!" she sounded just like Twilly at Frostvale. Melkior blinked at this, surprised at Kaede's action as Tetris snickered. "Sorry about that. It has been aeons since we saw you." The cyborg apologised, letting her hands rest on the table. "It truly has been. You have no idea how long we've been waiting" she sobbed, "Until the stars fell." A tear streaking down her metallic face, rust had spread further on her body, glinting like copper. Both the rain and passing years had not been kind to the two anachronistic Cyborgs. Melkior's expression softened. The years had been harsh on both cyborgs and they aged a fair bit. The technology they had now outdated. And yet Melkior noticed their weary appearance.

"You didn't have to be dramatic, Kaede." responded Melkior, "Just a simple 'hi' would suffice or a wave, but I do know it has been forever. I missed you all, plus the Alvenos... Why else did you think I would've returned from the other realm?" Diaglo motioned to her as Sally had no answer to that. Landon glared at the blacksmith, rather protective of his sister. "It's alright, Diaglo's an acquaintance of mine." she replied.

"Riiiiight. Just don't do anything weird," Landon told Diaglo sternly with a drawl, "After all, Kior's my duty for now. Going out to battle Zards... As usual, same ol' stuff I've been practising for months." No guarantee Landon got any better at training Zardmen though. The older Alvenos whistled as he left them to their own devices, an enhanced Light-sabre spinning. Mithlos, Sally and the rest sent their regards, seeing as the two former Stulos wanted to be left in private for now... The rushing wind flowed through the Inn window, rustling their hair.
"Want to go for a stroll outside, *Espirto?"* Diaglo offered gently.

"So how much remembrance?" It was much later in the afternoon as Diaglo trooped through sweet fragrances of spring, the flowers blooming near Willow Creek, with his friend following behind. They came across a cobblestone path leading to several wooden Farmer cottages.
"Flashes of the past," intoned Melkior, "it feels nice to feel the fresh air, I'd forgotten what it felt like," she embraced the wind as it flowed through her skin-bare clothes, she was trying a new style. "It seems as though this realm altered significantly, though I don't know how." Diaglo's expression darkened slightly, whisking away a strand of pale jade hair as Melkior questioningly gazed at him. He took a long breath.

"That's what I'm afraid of, *Fathyi*, change. You've changed since your new-formed experiences of life, no longer the old Misako I knew. How would we know if truly our friend staring back?" he challenged gently, "Who stuck through us during hardships, through those duties? Didn't want to lose you permanently in this life as well. We all needed help during last stages of the Soluna invasion, but none applied for this die-hard job." His ruby eyes pierced her, "Except you, Oeyken... Always with duty to protect people precious to you. Sys-Zero objected to the insane mission, but we were worried. Especially Devi and Sally." He looked away, unable to meet Melkior's crestfallen eyes. *"Gintanei*, we just wanted you to stay as in the past. That was your promise gave before the... event: *Walking between Dakittu, give my duty for those who supported."* For a few minutes nothing was said, except the faint hoots of a Leather-wing. Diaglo rested underneath shade of Treant trees which swayed in motion... His tears fell, soaking the moist soil. "I was afraid we'd lose you. It was if you've just walked here and suddenly a hero or someone untouchable."

The lady wiped away his falling tears. "... Diaglo," Melkior answered, "Do I act or appear any different?

Look at me, can't you know I'm so glad to see you?" Diaglo swept away his hair which fell upon his face as the young lady looked on the Alvenos blacksmith, tracing broad tanned arms as he held her, tail on her arms. There was silence as they stayed in this position for several minutes in the cooling breeze. It was a strange sight that was somewhat bearable. Closing eyes Melkior leant back against the blacksmith, she ran the back of her hand against the Alvenos's cheek gently. Diaglo blushed a little at this, her eyes reminded him of jewels. Two mismatched jewels. He smiled at the irony as she subconsciously drew closer. Diaglo's skin felt all clammy and icy, as though stiff. His lips themselves a bluish tinge. Melkior looked worried about this fact, shouldn't he at least be of warmth?
"You're so warm," he murmured as though freezing, "so warm. Unlike I." This was weird enough.

"Diaglo, I just wanted to know-" As she was about to question him, something interrupted her thoughts:

"Apart from your hair and form? Maybe," deduced a slow voice from behind them. It was Cysero, a rubber ducky in his hand, "Who is this Sys-Zero you were telling this lass about?" he asked the Alvenos. Diaglo being startled, just shrugged knowingly.
"A friend of ours," Melkior added, referencing Sys-Zero, but Cysero clearly didn't get the hint, but then he winked at her as though he *knew*.
"Cysero, why have you come here?" asked Diaglo, "Can't you see you're interrupting us?" The blacksmith wouldn't come without good reason, spending most of his spare time in the bathtub these days. In other words, he better have a plausible explanation!

The eccentric blacksmith laughed, a large hand on Diaglo good-heartedly and rubbing the hair affectionately. "That'll do, Alvenos, that'll do. Anyway, King Alteon received a letter, correct? Sent by the renter's due, and these bacon elementals." He pushed a parchment into Melkior's hands roughly. "Good ol' Moglins suggest checking it twice, ya never know when Sneevils been at it!" It was the letter Mithlos sent.
"Go ahead, open it." Cysero added at Melkior's puzzled expression. *Well, it couldn't hurt just to inspect it.* The three read it.

King Alteon, I'm surrounding your gates near Swordhaven NOON. I won't hesitate to use force against your citizens, my DOOOOM BLADE and Dakittu master commands it be so! I shall reconsider this if any heroes approach us this week or tomorrow. BUT I guess my nephew is too busy fighting pathetic monsters to consider. The following paragraph was scribbled then crossed out with hasty slanted handwriting and replaced with... *ALTEON, I AM COMING FOR YOU! MUHAHAHAHA, with the little DOOM BLADE TOO! COMING FOR YOU...! To finish everything! Swordhaven has NO HOPE, most of your heroes have fallen prey to their weaknesses...! Incompetence, fools. Your castle is defenceless. I AM DARKNESS, I have a 'little' surprise in store. But Heroes make their choice, or join the Dakittu!* The letter suddenly ended with the initials, L.S.D.K. There was a PS: *Omnipagon foresees all, commune at the Citadel tomorrow under dear wishes of our influential Inquisitor. Or else.*

"What does that nonsense mean? Sepulchre is insane." Cysero said, confused at this ranting. And that coming from him was something... Something about that last note brought a familiar chill. "Selpuchure wants us to come to a place called... The Citadel? He has nephew called Alex, as I can recall. For his own twisted reasons?" Melkior stated, glancing at the blacksmith's frozen expression of instantaneous recognition. "What is the Inquisitor?" she asked Cysero.
"The Inquisitor... We aren't talk. He's a *Kehoraet* totally paranoid about magic in his presence. Fortnights ago, he ordered fourteen of the Citadel guards to fire huge catapult-arrows at Bloodtooth - Swordhaven's local dragon. Bring down Bloodtooth, he ordered with flair. The plan almost succeeded. Crashing after just *six* arrows embedded in its side, the poor creature. Didn't even get to the bacon factory. Luckily it resorted to hiding in mountains! Person's even crazier than I. Now intent on hunting down magic users, doesn't matter who. He's desperate I tells you." Cysero emphasised. Greg the cricket chirped merrily at this. Complementing dual colours met brown eyes in silence, musing over his words.

"That's... disturbing," Melkior answered, . "" "But I need everyone's help on this plan I formulated..."

Bluish moonlight streams behind the deacon's curving hair, catching it briefly as those members murmured softly in contrasting sharp melodic tones. Unreal stained glass seemed to catch dazzling light of fractured glass, sending scattered lunar energy everywhere. The moons curved in their silent epinonch reached its zenith and struck the domed skylight in all its glory. At this, the one ordaining the service raised her voice in a harmonious and yet sensual tremor as the choir sang the second-last hymn. Heavy sulphuric incense seeps through the intoxicating air, arousing few dedicated (yet tired) citizens who attended. All trying their best to display 'interest'. Gold glinted everywhere, on the pews, near the elegant soaring arches of belfries and even on slightly open doors of the Citadel. Inviting all to come in as they wished (or as they dared) pleased... Gained by the Inquisitor's dealings with the uptight Paladins, sparing no expenses on AC, the currency introduced of late.

At displays of non-conformity, the choir looked very annoyed, but still continued their enthusiasm. As the incense burnt and flared higher, it seemed to have an effect of drowsiness upon those who listened. The priestess seemed to step up to the platform, touching the white shrine, singing a low-pitched throaty aria. *'Though endless perfection and onwards we strive, we thirst evermore for science to thrive.'* Lengthy service continued as the citizens struggled to mouth the complex words, Stryker and Doodler amongst these near the pews. It was torturous.

"Oh geez, if the security near this here area couldn't get tight enough!" Tetris complained, swooping through the encroaching Dakittu. Unknown to all, a humanoid figure flapped its wings once. It descended. Dislodging several passengers on its back who quickly leapt off and stepped onto the broad marble roof. Incredibly, none of the four hundred Citadels guards paid attention. Crouching on the roof of the Citadel, no one inside noticed the ruckus created as six others perched near the stained glass, glimpsing the service from afar. "This is your best idea?!" Mithlos frowned, "Next time, think of better plans Kior! This is worst than your disguises, way worse!" Kayo gave a distinct laugh at this.

As he spoke, Mithlos's legs wobbles slightly as if unable to maintain weight, "WOAAH! Firking... I can't STAND this humiliation much longer," the Alvenos whines, noticing that he stood directly above the skylight. Revealing... Let's not consider. Melkior gazed at this, this proved very interesting to watch. *Well, it's time for the service to end. And then we shall discover unknown obscurities of hidden truths.* The Vampire lord gave a thumbs up at Melkior and Sally as three others struggled to balance precariously. Chilebé was a constant companion now, so it scampered over to them cheerfully. It peeked over Melkior's shoulder as she adjusted her glinting stave. Melkior smiled at this display of affection, nuzzling its fuzzy warmth of fur. The staff seemed to be familiar to her hands, tingling. Twilight-tinged rays glowed warmly as the silent instrument gave out sparks, reminiscent of a weapon... In fact formerly the Jing staff, but 'enhanced' with Murray's ancient magic. It also had a slight change to its structure, becoming more angular and unwieldy. *To rescue everyone from their impending fates, I must go straight to the source.* She readied herself for combat, meditating on how innocent lives were cruelly taken by those with power.

"Glad I could be of use," he chuckled as Quentin nearly fell off the roof, "Don't worry! I haff got you, virgin!" The blond Oeyken quivered at this, failing her arms around in attempt to shield her vision from the sight, the Barber acrophobia. She clutched to Tetris's arm until the vampire thought his arm would be torn off. It took six agonising minutes for Tetris to prise a frozen-stiff barber off, but the two wasted a lot of time.

'Inflamed with passion, we ignite by burnt gears, arouse our awe for those Mecha feared.' Diaglo gripped the window plane, using his tail he flit the windows open.
"Virgin? Don't you male Vampires have any shame?" Quentin spluttered, Tetris danced with joy, he wasn't used to attention from girls.

"Naw, I shalt thunk that Slayer Seraphine removed dignity one-score ago," he snarled loudly, scaring Mithlos even more. The messenger back-flipped at the sound. "Ii! That hurt!" *CRICK!* A lengthening line slowly appeared in the skylight as Mithlos froze for a second. He looked down in black humour. "If this plan of yours hasn't been firking unbelievable, I would be laughing, I tells you!" he swore. Just then Mithlos whimpered as Melkior also made a grab, helping him up as fragile glass continued to shatter, it sank into his leg halfway down. Law of gravity did NOT help at all. He screamed in pain. "AAAH! NO... ! Irony of this torture! If you pull me up, it'll only get worse." he continued as Melkior looked anguished.

'Avenger who cometh, hear our pleas for ultimate change. Gloria, gloria, allelujah.' The crowd inside walked out of the Citadel into their city gates once the service had finished. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, but even that quickly shattered...

"HEY! Who's the 'ell up there?!" yelled one of the guards, seeing their shadows against the night. The guard pointed their spears at the figures, but just then Kayo distracted them. He leapt from the belfries, onto them. *SLIIISH! FWAP! Ssccch!* Slashing whirls of metallic clawed-arms braced the air as the terrified guards backed in terror at his face. With a *schling*, they watched as Kayo's arm suddenly ruptured into a copper corkscrew formation. Its revolving point wickedly glinting inches away from nearest guard's sweaty face. 345th guard gulps as he crawled away with a ghastly expression etched. "Let's just say I learnt some tricks of the techno-trade," Kayo stated coolly. There was silence as Inquisitorial guards processed what monstrosity appeared... Then their minds snapped- mentally. "AUUUUGH! A Mecha! Activate the mana-negation barriers! Fall back. Quickly!" the Inquisitor's 214th guard urged in a panic. They hurriedly tried to fight off Kayo's advances as he stormed up to them.

"Don't even think about laying one spear on us," Kayo affirmed, snapping a spear from the 318th guard... From behind. A near impossible feat. "Otherwise, you'll have me to deal with. 'Cause this Alvenos's a pretty good slice of the ol' iron." The cyborg couldn't resist a smile at this. Within the next thirty seconds, Kayo circles round the soldiers while applying swift roundhouse kicks, arm twists... And hard punting, they were surprised at the regularity at which this happened. "YAAAAAH! Take that, anachronic army of 400!" The remainer of guards flew left and right as they 'soared' over the mountain horizon and landed in a battered heap. Some of them even attempted to flee, but Kayo adjusted his night vision as his arms morphed again with alarming speed.

"Stop in the name of- What da heck-?"With a shriek, they were scooped up by Kayo's lengthening arms. All they could see was the hardware connecting them to him, feeling of levitation. As he tossed them over his shoulder, they managed to scream. "Mecha, may the firking Inquisitor stop- gaaahh!" They slammed into the ground minutes later, forming a tiny 'crater' where they impacted, this was not pretty. All you could see was splotches of distinct armour and dented helmets after the dust cleared. "Heh, I would like to see those guards manage that." Kayo smiled grimly as he dusted his iron knuckles. *A job well done.* Not bad for an outdated cyborg. He still had a few years in him yet. He stroked stubble as eye zoomed in on the damage caused.

"What in hell?! I can't fly further!" Tetris realises as he smashes through the skylight, bringing both Melkior and Mithlos down with a resounding clash. Diving steeply, the goofy Vampire-Lord catches Mithlos deftly as his form dispersed in time, back to his regular mage form. As he crouched on the wooden-beam supporting the Citadel's overhead roof, the glass rained down like falling icicles. "It's a magic-neutralising zone," he mutters at them, "Shoulda known the guards play dirty like that!" The deacon looks up as if expecting the arrival, but she didn't seem to notice the shadow of a bat descending. *She's only looking for the source of the sound, she can't sense us. Looking in the wrong direction.* Melkior realises, feeling the air rush sharply past her. Melkior landed squarely on the altar, the cold icy light streaming behind her through stained-glass windows, giving a sort of surrealistic halo effect to the entire scenario. Managing a sharp backflip in mid-air, she corrects her position. The blue Moglin squeaks on her shoulder, its excited cries echoing through the hollow Citadel.

" sent me on a mission to fulfil," Melkior states, looking at the Priestess with a expression of uttermost duty. "" The cloak she wore folded around her like a stream of dark velvet, concealing something beneath her pirate outfit. "Do you know what time it is?" The Deacon didn't respond, silent as a statue she paused. Without any regard to the figure the lady turned away, facing the fractured window in disdain. "It's the eve of Friday the thirteenth, the futile day when chaos finally reigns and deconstruction of order is imminent..." The priestess didn't reply but just glanced with a stern expression.

"It was also the week... where Kingadent Slugwrath finally challenged various Solunians holding back the Shadowscythe invasion - soon afterwards planetary empires also fell. Incidents which embodies disarray and Dakittu - an event which commemorates total descruction... In short, this requiem was promised during the events which preceded my disapperance. However this requiem referred to *everyone*, not just one person. I didn't understand back then, no one could either. How could anyone predict where evil strikes? Rosia always subtle about these issues. Now I have returned to protect... For Swordhaven's sake! In the name of Vixen, I shall vanquish desolation!"

"... Your unusual request... have been heard." replied the Priestess slowly, striding towards the one who spoke, "Of course, I can't let you go through with these proceedings. It would ruin everything in the plan stated. Plus, you're interfering with our requiem... And your friends should know." They shivered.

"I was summoned by Inquisitor of Aucharlon, Coeiré Legiéno, to serve of the Queen months ago. They were vicious, oh yes but I gained the gift of foresight from the main Inquisitor... I could sense both timelines and learnt the exact location and hour the Hero of Swordhaven arrives here." the blind priestess replied, fingering the pointed medallion on her chest, "There I found my true calling, channelling and siphoning mana from other worthless individuals in order to awaken the Queen. I learnt that magic is a dangerous art, witchcraft must be squished beneath the heavy fist of science and technology. I knew the future thus I am also known as Omnipagon." She turned to Melkior and pointed at her, the huge amber ring glinting on her slender fingers.

"Last of all, Inquisitor Legiéno gave me precise instructions: If any Hero with mana comes walking in curiously around this day or hour, I'll summon the Queen with the knowledge to eradicate them! Isn't that right... Misako *nee* Irwa? You used to be good friend of my ill-informed brother, I'm quite surprised you would be still alive after so long. Or sucha length of time. By all calculations, you should have been dead." A pause in the tense air. *How could the priestess even see her?* The fact of this simplicity chilled Melkior as the Citadel's priestess strode towards her, grasping the scattered pews around her. The Priestess was blind, no doubt about that. But that still raised more questions than answers...

"I am no hero, far from it. But I do believe in discovering the truth." muttered Melkior at this proclamation. She inched away from the trained Priestess, but just then the Priestess's hands lifted the veil away from those blinded eyes... *PASCHA?!* The surprises never stopped, Melkior could certainly testify to that. Still, she had to ask. "... How did you sense?" Pascha smiled with an eerie whisper, thoroughly reminiscent of Larosin's speech:

"Do you think I could be fooled by your changed voice? Do you think I couldn't sense elemental signatures you exerted?! Didn't you STOP to think where I vanished to those years ago?" Omnipagon said calmly, "why no one searched for signs of existence, sweet Devlin didn't even bother to search my location. For all HE cared, I fainted or fallen down a Westion mine-shaft or worse!" she scoffed, "Some brother he was, last time I ever trust him. How is he now?" the Priestess said in sickly sweet tones.

"But I doubt any of you can defy destiny. Appointed by the Inquistor to fulfil this task, and I oblige to him only. Because he gave me Sight of the future, thus ordained by him. I deem it as a reason... Only true 'vision' is of the future, rumoured to drive others to depths of insanity..." Pascha continued, as if there was

no pause. "I plunged into realms of unknown Chaos. I saw what I daren't speak of. Plagued by those obscure uncertainties, visions drove me to complete this task I was assigned - to be free is what I long for. But bonded to his will, no-one could escape. No one can. Fate constantly intertwines with others - a tangled loop of interlocking timelines, once joined and now frayed by a single event, the end of Time. Someone interfered with cosmic powers, but we were all trapped in a cycle. Of reincarnation, it never ends. We all fought our battles. But that is easily rectified," Pascha adds, "Anyone?" A pause. "Unless someone came who deems themselves worthy of this honour. To break this chain that bound us all. That day has come upon us."

Tetris had no answer for that as he perched on an overhead beam, suddenly Pascha turned to him. Eyes blazing. "Vampires in the Citadel!" she thrilled loudly, "Sacrilegious! A blot of blasphemy upon the sacred notes of the Inquisitor. You shall all, taste our wrath." she spoke slowly, "I shall ensure you all perish slowly, like all those wizards or mages tortured. They hardly could scream as the flames licked." Sally was horrified at the thought of such violence the Inquisitor dealt out daily. It was fanaticism in Pascha's eyes, her eyes seemed to gleam dully. "Are you aware... That the random Hero who defeats this ghastly summoned entity... Will have the power to modify this world as they so desire?" she added.

"Powers beyond imagine, to choose the ultimate fate of every individual on this planet, to do anything that is deemed near impossible in this dimension: To revolutionise and rewrite magical history beyond time! That is what the Inquisitor wants, and that in which almost everyone desires to have. That is the true test of finality, it depends on both choice and fate..." Silence filled the Citadel, it seemed to stretch longer due to tension. Then the air exploded with shouts.

"Firking Kelf and damnation! You shall do no such thing, Omnipagon!" Mithlos shouted, shouting behind Tetris and Melkior, shaking his fist, "Who are the true monsters that haunt Swordhaven? You only need look..." His voice faded at the rest of the speech Pascha made, but he quivered behind the pew with unspeakable fright, clutching his leg. "That-that sounds insane." he adds shakily. Pascha smiled with occultism as she tinkled her golden incense burner, "This is different from the Belrot monster evoked months earlier. No, this is much worse..." Melkior looked inquisitive at this statement.

"Watch," Pascha added softly, "I call upon the Queen... of Monsters, to come at Legiéno's beckoning. Evoke the ebil Citadel to obtain... The sacred Holomuniator containing unstoppable wrath of... Dire-fang, Xenemyuet!!" The ground started trembling as Melkior noticed the vibrations and back-flipped quickly, edging near the pews as Mithlos stood in terrified awe at the trembling ground. "It purges the town of its suffering, sanctifying mana as fuel." Pascha continued above the noise, "Look upon ye mighty and gaze upon voiceless depths. The Queen now performs CLEANSING upon Swordhaven's subjects! Bear witness to its wrath and fury." Pascha pragmatically screamed. (*Lariat*, commented Quentin, *Giving all of us a headache with all that talking*).

"Wace is this doing?" Mithlos asked uncertainly, at this he was able to limp again. As though the injury had never existed, but still the liquid pooled down and soaked the carpet. That was very strange in itself, but Melkior had no time to question this. "Surely such a beast couldn't exist!" He continued trembling as a widening smile crept onto the seer's face. It crept everyone out, but most of all Sally. The Priestess took out a large compass and proceeded to draw a 4 m spiral, radiating from the centre of Citadel - complete with the symbol everyone knew: the Octagon. Anyhow, a vastly different magical ritual. everyone could tell. Pascha withdrew an object, it glinted. This was different from standard Holomunitators - yet it had the same crested emblem as in Falconreach. Released steam seared around smoking edges of the circle as the item responded in kind, glowing subtly. The dusty device Pascha forced onto the spiral glimmered with a lustre of ivory. As it started to glow rapidly, it spun faster and faster.

They could almost see its gears turning quicker, until it was purely a blur of whitish colour. It shifted fluidly as it formed into a vague bookish shape, as it hovered far above the spectators. Until it reached the ceiling

almost touching the shattered sky-dome. The yellowed pages flipped in a fast blur as the weird device continued its auto-programming, until it reached the correct page. Suddenly, it stopped on a page depicting two words: *Sommeil Impérissable.* The moonlight started sparkling as a jagged claw violently thrust its way out of the object. They could hear the penetrating snap of its joints which eased the route. As nauseating silences accompanying its arrival grew, time stood still once more. A scaled wrist blurred its way through boundaries which separated the creature from reality. *YES,* the tender voice crooned with savage ferocity, as commands issued from its wretched form. Absolute horror dawned on everyone's face at once. *I'M FREE, UNLEASHED! AVERT YE GAZE AND DESPAIR!*

"Down!" Quentin ordered as immediately something exploded above the group. "Oh my Lorithia!" yelled Mithlos, "If this beast turns out a total disaster, we are SO screwed! We're so screwed for a second time in a row! The mayhem before was bad enough, but this is WORSE than death itself!" Worse than death?! Melkior would have pointed out those ironies. They had no idea of the experience she had with the One, if they knew... Something took shape as the Queen's twisted and convoluted form rippled with eager glee. Sighing with ironic satisfaction all the while. Dazzling light seeped out of it, leaking as the partially revealed... Monstrosity continued to heave its way out. As the monster continued, the group continued to talk despite their fears.

"That's understatement! Inquisitorial council will just reanimate us anyway." yelled Sally, until she saw Melkior staring at her. "It's not as you think. They have THAT kind of power, just trust us. You have no idea what they're capable of!" she explained rather hastily as the sky seemed to shatter. With disconcerting silence, it rasped and breathed threats against all. Its empty eye-sockets swivelled around, looking for someone worthy of its recognition. It stared at Pascha and it smiled at this dedication. At the act, the deacon just gazed straight at the Queen. "GO, cleanse this renewed world for your cause! Punish their guilt!" she ordered as the Queen nodded. The thing... roared and all the stained windows erupted. So much for costs. *KSSSH!* Glass blew out as the Queen exhaled. Everyone was forced to huddle closer as debris rained down harder over the pews. Even Tetris was shocked.
"Child of an ebil Lich!" Quentin muttered, but the Queen took no notice and headed straight for the Citadel doors. Throwing open the citadel doors, the Queen flowed straight down the mountains with the speed of a freight train... Straight for Swordhaven!
"Did I tell you how doomed we are?!" Tetris called in imitation of Artix. Everyone yelled at Tetris for that comment. "TETRIS!"

"So, is anyone going to celebrate our dance party at Skull Punch Island, we thought so! I dedicate this song to everyone who's unlucky enough to board a sinking ship. I can see all of you Shadowfall have come to participate, but most of Swordhaven people suspiciously absent. Good hang you've come! I hardly wait to get to the bones of this concert! We are in search... For the fabled Guitar of Eternity! You there - carry my deadly pluck!" yelled the smooth deep-toned voice of Voltaire accompanied by several gypsies as he clutched the microphone close to his mouth. He stroked his moustached chin as two skeletons aboard the ship chuckled maniacally. There were accompanied cheering and whistles from the motley audience. Doodler was awed at the pluck he was given. *"Now! LET'S GET READY TO PAR-TAY!"* the top-hat musician yelled out amidst the cheers.

Back in Swordhaven, time stopped for most citizens. "WAAH?!" yelled everyone in entire Swordhaven town as a sudden darkness blotted the moons momentarily. Voltaire's displayed clock struck midnight at that moment, it rang through as the mists spread towards the town. Gleaming grey eyes came out of the Dakittu as the Queen struck quickly and deliberately, something wet and glistening seemed to soar through the air as shocked citizens watched. It seemed to shine with a dull light. "What the heck is going on? I so (yawn) tired, gravely tired. Wha-" Landon cried, before falling onto a tree stump, apparently 'asleep'. If you could call it that. As he was slumped like that, something emerged from the bushes. Unnoticeable against the night shadows a veined root black with hatred slowly wrapped around him, before it shuddered slightly. Ever so carefully the root soon sprouted... Thorns to ensnare its victim. The sturdy foundations of the root

rippled fluidly and seemed to tighten its hold. As the citizens struggled to understand what was happening, they realised that something was deadly wrong.

Silence rang out as the second victim to succumb to the event fell unconscious of the Queen's own accord. The confused onlookers expressed . "Sarah! Lilith and even Quebetus!" The terrified Artix counted on his fingers, afraid as the tally rose higher, "Fayle, Hathur Silbane! ... No! This can't be! At this rate... We'll be the only ones left, excluding those somewhat unaffected by the whatever..." He told Yuglar, Twilly and Robina. The bold Paladin could do nothing but wail helplessly, falling to his knees as the numbers of victims rose higher. The Queen continued to look on. Cleric Dawn assisted the weeping villagers, some of them had fallen where they were standing.
"Lorithia, what have we done to deserve such a fate!" Then Artix had a rare brainwave, "This has got to be the work of... The ebil twisted Chaos-Lord Escherion! The Eye-mancer!" His eyes blazed with an insipid fury, he looked infuriated at the destruction seen all around him, he clutched his double-axe as he growled: "Let's get dangerous with this jiggy Chaos-Lord!" Just then, a long wet tentacle-arm zoomed, landing next to him as six huge glistening eyes gleamed in the sky. Luminous ragged wings cleaved through the sky. "WANT TO BET?" The Queen offered as Artix cowered at the sight of its gaunt face. The Queen roared again, its rows of daggered fangs showing as it continued to target other victims. Its root arms curved around another hapless gentleman and he fell unconscious.

"MORE... MORE... DAKITTU!" It screamed in blood-lust, "SLEEP IS THE GREAT LEVELLER, IT DOESN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FOES OR ALLIES. ALL ARE ALIKE IN ENDLESS SLEEP! KINGS, PEASANT, KNIGHT! ALL SHALL SUCCUMB TO ME! A FEAST TO BEHOLD MY SENSES." Impossibly, the Queen seemed more organic than ever before, its skeleton arms replaced quickly into fleshy thick tendrils. Its eyeless sockets seemed to balloon until they formed green globules of shifting eye-goo. The last thing to sprout was its beastly claws forming out of the arm-tendrils and the Queen was completed. "YESSS! THIS IS MORE LIKE IT!" The monster Queen turned to Artix, its jaws widened in a sneer. "YOU'RE NEXT, VON KRIEGER." The paladin gulped softly. "mummy." Artix sobbed as he ran for his life. The Queen laughed at its joke, the sound was grating. "HEHEHEHEH!" it screeched in a pathetic imitation of an evil laugh. Due to everyone's terror, none dared to laugh along with the Queen.

"Melkior?!" Mithlos yelled. For the third time, this Alvenos was scared. He couldn't even bring himself to say the words. "Now, what do we do?! That... Queen is a firking... A firking-. I don't even have any appropiate words for this Chaos-infested creature!"
"Wace? No use standing around and doing nothing while Swordhaven 'burns'. We take the fight to her, that's what we'll do!" said Quentin, she gripped her sword. "FOR SWORDHAVEN AND THE ENTIRE CONTINENT OF LORE!" she yelled, "No badass Master tells us around! Time for us to split up!" The Queen's head swung around at each of them, trying to determine which of the people was talking, seeing the group break apart severely disorientated the monstrous being. At this

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"Where am I?" Melkior wondered, "If this is real?"
"A DIMENSION WHICH IS SEPARATE FROM YOUR FABRIC OF REALITY, THUS THIS IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL PLANE WHERE EVERY SOUL IS CONNECTED TO A LIFE-SOURCE. THIS... IS THE REALM OF THE CHAOS. FROM THIS MOMENT, YOU ARE CONNECTED TO EVERY EVENT THAT EVER WAS. EVERY THREAD OF CHAOS, STRINGS OF FATE. AS I AM." The Queen replied, "it's a kind of united consciousness of everyone's souls, excluding yours of course." Melkior's expression was weirded out.
"Oh sheez, I never wanted to see everyone unconscious in space with their chained bodies," Melkior commented, averting her gaze from them, "If this is a kind of weird judgement from Neon Genesis, I'm out of here! Wace, can you speak in plain Lorian for once," The Queen chuckled at this, its horrific jaws widening from the information given out.

"NO, THIS ISN'T TRUE. THIS IS EVERY TIMELINE THAT EXISTED, AND THE POWER TO ALTER YOUR WORLD IS NOW WITHIN YOUR GRASP. ISN'T THAT YOUR DESIRE ALL ALONG? TO BRING ALL YOUR FRIENDS BACK, TO BE RESTORED?"
"... Oh, my theory is correct." sighed Melkior, wondering if Vixen had access to this power. Maybe she right here with Devi and the others. "... What?!" she could scarcely believe what she was hearing, "Why?" The Queen stood corrected, it scoffed at the lady.

"DO YOU KNOW NOT OF 'THE RESET'? BEING ACCOUNTABLE FOR EVERY ACTION THEY'VE COMMITTED, THEY WERE PUNISHED FOR THEIR INNER TRANSGRESSIONS AS STATED IN ETERNITIES PAST, DARKNESS HAD CONSUMED THEM ALL. NONE WOULD ATONE FOR THE HIDDEN DARK SECRETS EACH HELD WITHIN THEMSELVES. SO I HAD INITIATED THAT EVENT AS A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE FOR YOUR SOCIETY TO LEARN THE TRUE MEANING OF REPENTANCE. Everything had gone as I've foreseen, perfectly re-enacted for eternity. You're handed the 'key' to release them? And so it will be! The cave of ignorance covers all, where as the philosopher sees through the walls." Melkior's eyes widened, she looked around and saw...

Cascading sweat. It still smelt fresh, even in the shadowy cockpit in which its pilot sat, ready for commands issued from frantic Sys-Zero and dark matriarch, Odessa Pureheart. Wearily, the golden mecha called Astern staggers to its feet, remnants of its structure left standing after the fierce battle. It was fragmented beyond repair, it was a miracle how the combatant came back for more... Defending the city in which occupying residents were ignorant of threats that awaited them. Inside, the pilot stoically saw rubble that surrounded the White Castle and bowed her head in dismay.

Reluctantly she heeded the duty to keep on stalling. As long as she had to. For everyone's sake, other units cut down earlier by these opponents. She seemed half-catatonic, as if the destruction couldn't penetrate. The gigantic figure of the opponent loomed closer towards its target, Kingadent Slugwrath wheeling around in a half-turn. Its shadow cast a huge outline over the reddening horizon of the slumbering city as Astern's minor frame shudders once more, crude oil gushing from its side. "Challenge is nil. For too long aliens have stood in our triumphant route to conquer beyond galaxies. Why does Soluna resist the inevitable?" Slugwrath Senior broadcasting to her onto a hologram, his moustache bristling. "For once, accept our Shadowscythe overlords, commander. I've heard many tales about your exploits. They called you chalice of Trisula, Celestial Aurelius... Imagine my disbelief when I saw that this defence commander is an ordinary... Stubborn pilot!" With a swipe, he disconnected her Holomunitator panel and communication to Sys-Zero fizzled out. The pilot looked horrified, so much for trial of synchronisation years earlier. To think that her life already took a downwards turn after outbreak of skirmishes around Soluna. The lights gave out, with a loud crash, the visor still clear. She glanced at a grainy faded photo of three blurred faces, obscured by the murky light. 'Don't want the world to view me. Closest I've ever felt to love.' She remembered their faces, it seemed far-away since that fateful day she left the Police-department. She had no choice in the matter.

"You broke Soluna's truce at all costs! Wace happened to that promise! Who gave you the information to penetrate those defences?!" the pilot yelled out as Slugwrath gave a boastful laugh at the pilot's expense, jeering at her confusion. She already guessed. "Don't tell me it's who I think it is... Please!"

"War is not philosophy, Mako. It's as a game of chess. The citizens merely pawns in universal game for reputation and Odessa is the defender. Only she sent out all pawns gained for granted, losing allies. But how can you forget the noble knight serving a King well?" Slugwrath said, trying to get to the point. Rosia had told Slugwrath everything and corrupted him too. Even after all this pain endured. The pilot's face drained of all colour, Vixen had taught her chess well, but... was this a final revenge? "With your defeat, Soluna is left with no defence. In fact, I've even thought of a name for this city in commemoration of me. city of Shadow, Fall of all hope... Shadowfall!" he said, sharpening his Katana, "Those who live by the sword of

justice not know of atonement? Foolishness. The last they will hear of you. Goodnight doomed victor!" The pilot realising her time was up frantically pressed the eject button... But it failed. Tears streamed from her eyes. Doomed to loneliness, without her friends. "A plague shall befall-" Suddenly the line cut out and was no more. Slugwrath looked across the lake, which shifted. A row of large bubbles rose to the surface and quickly dissipated. Iron was heavier than water.

As a familiar lady watched this scene with a distanced look. So it all went according to plan, that should please her Master greatly. A vain face framed by the hidden shadows of the White castle. Long auburn hair brushed against her shoulders as she grinned. Well, that should teach her! Loud raucous laughter echoed from the corridors as the sound continued. As the lady fled back into the darkness, she glimpsed a shaft of light from the castle's skylight grew dimmer. Stealthily until it faded completely. At this, the lady's pupil became twin slits as she realised. *"... The Reset."* It howled dismally.

"I don't listen to you at all, you're just trying to trick me as others used on me." yelled Melkior, remembering what happened, "Don't you know that absolute power corrupts?!" The Queen heard her comments as the creature looked startled at this revelation. It didn't expect this response from the mortal yet impressionable person in front.
"BUT YOU WILL BE INVINCIBLE, COULD RULED CHAOS! WITH ME! WE WOULD WIPE AWAY ALL MAGI-" the monster continued, it seemed to stutter. As regal as it seemed at first, simple objection seemed to confuse the beast. It couldn't take 'no' for an answer, but it fell silent in self-denial. It was doubting itself, questioning its own authority. Now that Melkior was confusing the Queen, its resolve seemed to crumble in such a confrontation. The Queen snarled.
"BECAUSE OF THE GUILT FELT OVER CAUSING THE RESET, YOU SUPPRESSED EMOTIONS. Huh? YOU ARE SO TINY. HOW COULD YOU NOT RESIST THE POWER? Larosin but a puppet for me to issue queries, relatively easy to influence. But her thoughts were her own, she chose to be the instrument to which the end justifies the means."

"Maybe so, but all the power in this world won't bring ANY of my old friends back! I have a feeling you're not as others believe you are. There's a simple reason I sought you out: You're Larosin's master. And manipulating events behind the scenes. You think that after lifetime of people betraying me, I wouldn't learn? You and the Inquisitor made a mockery of my Soluna friends, reanimating them even after their lives were over. Everyone's sacrificed in some cosmic game of power and corruption. Is this one big joke for you all? If I could change one thing of the past, I will do it now. Before you can interfere any further. Because I believe I know your weakness and can use it." Melkior said, distracting the Queen from thinking about destruction of Swordhaven.
"NO you can't!" The Queen bellowed, "It'll CHANGE THE OUTCOME I'VE PLANNED SINCE THE RESET." The huge monstrous Queen writhe and squirm in agony. In disbelief at how things had turned out.

"No defeat penetrated me, no eternal enemy changed what I absolve, I owe to my friends my duty. Nothing will swerve me from the route of JUSTICE! *Contra Felicem vix deus vires habet!"* Melkior's bluish eye flashed a startling orange as she roared: *"I determine my own destiny! No one else!"* At this, the Queen wailed helplessly as the greyness of the background began to wash away, replaced by fabric of space-time being ripped apart from the inside out. Glowed around the lady an aura of night was unleashed, thick and gelatinous as strong black tar. The intoxicating aura seemed to crawl up the lady's leg, it seared with power. At this, Melkior yelled as she altered the events of past. Nothing seemed to happen at first. Except a disembodied eerie male voice called from the darkness: *Unlocked Evolution Mode 1.* "CAN'T YOU FEEL THE POWER COURSING THROUGH YOU?! THAT'S HOW SATISFYING IT FEELS. SEIZE THE DAKITTU, EMBRACE IT AS YOUR OWN." The Queen chuckled to itself, it looked worried, "ROSIA MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE, SHE DID NOT OBJECT. Don't worry, your friends are just as helpless, but they're here. Concealed and sealed by the Dragons of eons ago, SHADOW HAS DOMINATED!" The Queen bellowed loudly. Everyone winced in their endless sleep.

At this Melkior returned to 'reality' she gasped, her eye colour winking out. "They're here?! Devi! Vixen! I've been waiting!" she yelled excitedly, forgetting what she intended to do. Just then, the same eerie voice called: *Vixen evolved... Into Metallica-Vixen*.
"I hope that isn't what I think it is." muttered Melkior to herself, noticing that the timeline was being changed as she spoke, she held out the Jing-Staff and admired it for a minute. In an instant, it twinkled out and a luminous glow surrounded the item. It seemed to hum lowly, spinning in mid-air. A second later, it slowly covered with a familiar molten ore material. It gleamed softly. Melkior thought of Vixen, she thought of Master Wasabi, Devi and all the friends she had gained through the years, was ultimate power worth losing everything meant to her? No, it wasn't. Power was an illusion. Just like everything else. The destiny spoken of was to break the illusion that surrounded the realm, releasing everyone from their bounds. No one would trapped in the doomed cycle of the Reset. But who knows what will come of this?

"This is for everyone, who ever unjustified by the Queen of Chaos." the lady spoke softly, a tear trickling down her cheek. *"Kyuuuuuuu-bi!"* Just then a high-pitched cry echoed as Melkior looked around, confused her eyes settled on something in front of her. The voice seemed gentle, soothing and full of hurt. She could scarcely believe her eyes, it was incredible. The... The- What was it? It looked almost formed as a small animal mecha, but whole creature over half her height. It was largish silver chrome robotic fox, with glowing green eyes. It yipped in recognition, its sharp muzzle pulling on her clothes in discretion. She patted the creature in wonder as it nudged her insistently. The touch felt cold and hard as she ran the palm to the base of its sleek spine.

The fox eager to wait for her to come to common sense, it continued yapping as its eyes gleamed. Its eyes gazed soulfully until Melkior's eyes rested on the crested head of the creature. Hair brushed against her, reddish and vivid. *No way... It couldn't be.*
"Vixen?" Melkior asked, "Is that you in there? Is this a projected image you chose to take as a spirit? Can you be released?" The robotic Vixen nodded then it nudged joyfully again, eyes twinkling with sorrow. Glad to be reunited again! It looked friendly.
"Is Devi here? Let's talk about this later!" Melkior sighed. Things used to be easier when *both* of them could communicate! *Wace?* Vixen pawed her in eagerness, gasping at the Queen of Monsters. The Queen was about to grab the robot in its claws, trying to grip it. Alas Vixen seemed to trot round and motioned to her friend, cold steel beckoning to her invitingly. It seemed to plead with her.

"Wha? You want me... To ride on your back? You sure?" Vixen made sounds of recommendation. This was like a charade. "I've missed you two sorely," Melkior told the female-fox 'android', the creature crooned and closed its eyes in pleasure. At this, the Queen noticed the two talking. The monster's eyes narrowed in anger as it screeched, "I WON'T LET YOU TWO WIN THIS ROUND! A WORLD WITHOUT MAGIC IS WITHIN GRASP! SWORDHAVEN IS DOOOOMED!" Silence.

"Not if I had anything to do with this." Melkior yelled, "Enough of this doom! Let's change our outcome!" Sitting astride Vixen, it felt cold as ice as the two friends launched through the air with the force of a speeding bullet. Just then another thunderstorm rained down on the Queen as the robot Vixen roared and time stood eerily still. Gripping the staff tightly. Nothing for them seemed to halt, it was terrifying to look down and see absolute nothingness - only a seeping chaos-wracked atmosphere. Time slowed down but enough for the descent to lengthen dramatically. In a split second, Melkior wondered whether she was going to survive this. Another close laser blasted out from Vixen, searing and sizzling. "Vixen!Use *Fiery Incinerating Vortex!"* The fox's audible voice pierced as the robot's eyes flashed rapidly. It smiled. A blast rippled out from the robot's central-core as suddenly discs of blue-flame solidified. Vividly spun through the air, the flames collided with the monster as it braced the attack. However the sudden attack rippled with inertia, seeping into the abomination. *"Mea Culpa!"* screamed the lady, determined to see the complete re-sealing of the Queen.

Another thunder struck the dome of the sky, it seemed to split the realm apart as everything seemed to fall

to pieces. Just then the Jing staff caught the Queen unaware, it struck the Queen as it winced in disgrace. "FOOLISH! NOTHING CAN SEAL ME AWAY! I DESPISE EVERY LAST HEROIC LORIAN! NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF BLOODY FOOLS," Snarled in anger, soaring and lengthening thorny roots towards them, it chuckled evilly, "I shall make sure you corrupt-" Halfway, chaotic Queen paused in its task. It seemed to snarl curses at them.
Melkior smiled briefly, "Not even this Jing staff enhanced with... *Crystallised Dragon's Breath?* From one of the Dragon's cave?"

A moment or two passed. Withdrew tendrils in confusion as the creature considered the outcome. Then the Queen screamed in shock and fury at this realisation. Its left arm seemed to blur. Then its right twisted as the monstrosity flared brighter than flames itself. Its six eyes widened as its talons slashed at the remaining of interlocking tendrils. Desperate to get away from whatever was enveloping it away. Its 'arms' disintegrates suddenly from contact with the item, leaving it helpless as the crystal continued its fundamental job. Each time, an attempt to lash out against Vixen and her occupant. But the movements were rendered immovable as Vixen stuns the monster in mid-air. "AAARRRR!" The Queen of Chaos screeched with horrendous vibrations, "AAAAAHHHH! I DIDN'T INTEND THIS! CURSES! SEEEAALLED AGAIN! BY SOMEONE WORTHLESS!" A vortex seemed to form immediately to the left, as entire monstrous figure of the abomination seemed to warp, distort then twist on itself. Before imploding and vanishing into another dimension it couldn't escape from. "NOOOOOOOOOOOO!" A key appeared in place.

"Kyuuuuu!" Vixen yelled excitedly as they landed on the other side. Panting slightly, Melkior almost collapsed from the intense activity she had to activate. But Vixen grabbed her with metal fangs.

"Thanks Vixen, I knew I could count on you!" Melkior congratulated Vixen. But the fox looked sad, it pawed the key at the ground in nostalgia. "Huh? I wonder what firking Kelf this is?" The fox robot panted. Running a finger through looping holes of the embossed key, she glanced. The Oeyken was waiting patiently as the friend ran through her open legs, gripping the key with both paws. It playfully butted her. As it did, Melkior noticed a tiny keyhole where there normally would be none. It was then Melkior understood. Without a word, the lady ran a hand over the robot Fox, the exterior felt smooth and curvy as she inserted the key and gave it a sharp twist. Vixen winced, before the changes began. Metal became warm flesh, slender paws slowly transitioned into grasping tender hands, the crested red hair brushed against firm shoulders. It was then that the two could look at each other in the eyes. The two hugged each other in disbelief at everything that happened, it was unbelievable what passed.

"Vixen?" Melkior stuttered, "You're back. That... unexpected. What happened back there? How did you morph into that?!" Vixen blushed.
"Finally, I was so tired of yelling 'Kyuuu!' all the time! Misako? Is that you?!" Vixen yelled, realising the dramatic change her friend had made. Melkior's eyes glistened, "I reincarnated. That's all." Stunned silence. "Can you explain? That was confusing, Vincor."
"Well, explain why you're wearing those clothes and looking like a bat out of hell? And what's with that nifty staff?" Vixen said.
"Long story, long-long-long story Vincor. Unless you want the long version." Melkior sighed, not bothering with any details.
"Just joking. I wasn't expecting such attitude from you." Vixen smiled, "Anyway, you were asking about Devi. He's quite happy where he is, so are the others. I saw them just in the other... realm. Understandably. And yes, he also is well..." She winked quietly, "But I'm not going to tell you what he became. You'll just have to figure it out for yourself."

"As for me. I was in the realm of the Time-Lords, a Celestia deity as an ironic joke sought to transform me into a mecha fox that said 'Kyuu' all the time. Not funny. Falerin said the only way I could morph back is if Chaos was dispelled and sealed again in its rightful place. I don't like him! AT ALL!" The foxy human

growls at this statement.

"WACE? Really?" Melkior explained. Vixen just grinned secretly, "... Funny. I've been searching all time cause we're friends."
"Yeah, we're friends till end of time - literally? I get it. But do me one favour." Vixen begged, "Time to give up and let go of your insecurities, ok? I don't want to see you as this. Taking such extreme measures to be reunited. I understand, but its too long."
"... I'll try. But it's just as Matos Tsuba said: *Every journey has one path, we just have to choose to take it."* Melkior said. Vixen gave a awkward thumbs up, before blinking (she was unused to having hands), "Go ahead with that philosophy." Vixen said sincerely, clasping hands with Melkior. "But I'm afraid you can't take me back, Misako dear. I now exist out of time's limited boundaries..." she ran a hand through her crimson hair thoroughly. "Yet my Force abilities are directly connected to... The Time Dragon." It took some time to sink in.
"... Wace? That's... Not possible." Melkior said, eyes widening. "What?"
"That means," Vixen said clearly, "My very existence maintains the time-line for some unknown reason... Queen of Monsters sent Larosin to... Rupture our timeline, I guess - I didn't know Rosia's full motives. If I continued to live, then that very power... would eventually destabilise our Solunian world, cause time to be destroyed. It was never to be. More explanation? That same Force could theoretically..."
"Cause Swordhaven or our entire world to finally collapse... under the laws of... Logic?" Vixen's eyes lowered. So it was true.

"...WHA?!" exclaimed Melkior, realising the implication Vixen had stated, "But... That means the Queen planned everything from the *very* beginning! That can't be... Tsuba said that the Force was each selected... By the most gifted stulos... of all?! Firkin-" She swore loudly.
"That's right. My Force wasn't chance or randomized. Neither were your power, Olapen's or Devi's. Our powers were all decided by... The Queen and The One. We could each choose our alignment and how we used them, but the rest of this was... Random but still connected."
"... That's got to be the weirdest explanation in the entire galaxy." commented Melkior, "And weirdest experience of all *time."*
"Not to mention, most understated and inexplicable theory," sighed Vixen aside, "That does scratch the surface of everything unanswered. But it does explain why our lives were so... ugh, I can't even say it... Implausible. That's enough soul-searching for now. The point is: Now you have a choice!" she said cheerfully. Melkior was so confused by this sudden switch of tone that she ended up staring.
"I, uh, Vixen. You don't need to push decision-making onto me so soon." blinked Melkior, apologizing for the statement. Vixen just looked away, almost complementing her friend's tone. The girl looked pleadingly desperate.

"... Alright. This shouldn't be so hard - not as I expected." Vixen breathed slowly, "Melkior or Misako... If you decide to return back to Swordhaven, just expect things to be... not as they seem. If you don't want to return... Well, it's up to your choice now. After all, what are friends for? But I won't forget your choice then. Not ever. Nor will I forget our friendship and the willingness you stood up for me."
"Vixen," began Melkior slowly, "What are you saying? Why are you acting like this?" Vixen just cast her gaze away, but she hugged her.
"Don't regret your decision, because I care about you. Rejecting fate or not, it's all the same to me..." Vixen whispered. "I'll miss you."
"I'll miss you too Vixen, parting hurts doesn't it?" Tears stung both their eyes, it began to fall down like rain, "This seems like Deja vu."
"Cause I'll firking miss your caring attitude. Every smile during our *kelf, shigu* of every fantasy. But it's time to let go of me now, amigo." Vixen sobbed. It seemed like ages for them to let go. "So what's the fate of Swordhaven gonna be? I'll leave that up to you... Friend. There's no need for any words, *silence is just enough to last a lifetime,"* The chains of people began to break around them, before shattering. They were

free of their restraints, free of their never-ending cycle of foretold doom.

"Vixen?" spoke Melkior timidly, there was a soft glow surrounding Vixen's form. This glowiness formed an aura of bright light as it began to arc, until it seemed as though the entire place glowing. It grew overwhelmingly brighter until it seemed to engulf the Chaos realm itself.
"Hmm?" said Vixen in a heavenly tone, almost as if she was satisfied with the results. Her form seemed to flash a softer inner-blue.
"I'll miss your foxy and gentle attitude, can't believe... You're now an angelic... It suits you. Totally!" smiled Melkior, in total awe.
"Entertaining a *reality-warper* unaware," beamed Vixen, "and that makes all the *firking* difference."
Everything faded to black.

Pascha screamed at the revelation that things did not turn out as planned. She fell back, feeling the intense heat that the precious ring dominated. She could almost feel the accessory 'shrieking' with pain, even as she agonizingly rubbed the Ring of Intent, calling it 'precious' over and over as a sort of consolation. "The Queen... should have completed the Requiem, is it not so? Is it as you wish?" she breathed threats against her imaginary opponent. She was alone in the cathedral, with only her thoughts. Something at the front of her hand seemed to force her clutch the pew for support. Blind she might be, but the ring clarified her wayward thoughts. She visualised the day the Inquisitor 'summoned' her, from distant reaches of Soluna city. Just like he did for some of the Soluna population months afterward. The dead he could revive, but they were at his mercy. He recruited some as his faithful guards, the rest he left them as they were. Lost, alone, terrified of punishment in this new world. Calling for Devi, who never came when desperately needed. Somehow managed to gain the trust of the alien Inquistor... Pleased with her somehow, but something made him angered. Pain? This theory called 'Magic'? She asked him once innocently. Biggest mistake. Glaring at her, his guards struck her directly. Out of pity, the Inquisitor later offered her a visible means of Sight through one object... The Ring of Intent. The ring... was everything, and showed her secrets of an unseen world.

Few had seen reality - as it was and lived. But somehow she survived. The item she wore - a link to the present which demonstrated omniscience, showing her the Chaos realm... And the Queen of Monsters in its true grotesque glory. The Queen beckoned to her, just like countless others before. Who could forget that ultimate ghastly Queen? Pascha remembered that day she awakened to a new 'reality', this Force allowed her to visualise the Future- with unforeseeable intensity. "SO YOU STUMBLED ACROSS ME - REPLACE YOUR DAKITTU WITH VISIONS OF THE GLORIOUS? SURELY THIS CAN BE ARRANGED..." Untouchable yet subtle, she craved knowledge thus it consumed her competely. Those binding visions astonished her and blew away all doubt. *All we are is dust on the breeze, illusions through time itself.* Gathered more knowledge, retaining a frail veil of the shifting future. Deterioration? Everything was ashes. Vaporous futile wishes of the restless. Soulless remnants stared back at her, unaware of their gormless fate, they reached out to her, crooked smiles horribly distort on their hallowed 'face': *Faaaatee, yoouu can noot... Ressssiissstsss... Fate.* They called for her. Through those lone confines.

Flashes of rapid-shifting colours pierced her Sight, confused she shrunk back at her pervaded Sight. Visions weren't supposed... to be like this. The Sight was a blessing, not like this! She tried in vain to shield her eyes to no avail. Blood-red though amorphous as mutated amoebas, blindly... Groping for her... Replaced by growing static. Even as she now felt the Queen's will ebb away, Pascha felt the former time lines being looped back to their proper chronological place. At this, the amber-Ring the Inquistor gave her shimmered once and shattered into a million pieces. Leading her back into permanence of darkness, crashing back to her true 'reality'. She could no longer sense or see anything around her environment - dependence on the Sight ruined her. "Nooo! Anything but that!" As she felt hoarse screams left her lips, she was reminded of the Oeyken she once was. The memory was of her assuring the brother she protected as they smiled upon

each other. Sad but concise, in Soluna City. "Brother... I have failed you." she whispered, shattered by the revelation. Reaching out a hand, Pascha fingered her incense. Its smooth curved edges comforted her slightly, now she was but a hollow shell.
Instinctively, she wiped a 'stain' off her hand, "Out, firking blot of indignity..." she sighed as she never felt the ground underneath her.

Dawn rose once again in Swordhaven, upon the unconscious bodies of several citizens. Some of them twitched in response to stimulii. Upon this, many citizens seemed to wake up, dazed and confused. They muttered about strange events that took place weeks ago. Mithlos, Sally and Diaglo stirred from their sleep. "I... can't believe the Queen took away her!" sobbed Sally shortly after she woke up, "After all we did to prevent Kelf from happening!" Mithos just threw himself at Artix, bawling at this revelation. "We did our best... BUT IT WASN'T enough! Even those crazy events, history repeats itself! *YAWA* it all! I don't wanna cry no more!" Mithlos wailed melodramatically, "I wanna go jump in the stulos's-" Tetris cut him off, angrily shouting. *"Nato! Walque! Nato!"* Mithlos continued, pounding his knuckles into the solid ground and wincing at each pounding. It was then that Tetris licked him on the knuckles, eagerly he stuck out little tongue and pressed his lips to the wound. The vampire would have gone further with this act - but his companion was not impressed and threw him over the horizon. "YAWA!" Slightly miffed, the Alvenos sulked and just stared at where Chilebre sniffled softly. "AW! Don't cry little Mogwai!" Chilebre looked morose, sniffling his button nose and just circling around pointlessly.

"Chilebre... Wace's the matter?" asked Diaglo gently, talking to it as if it was a baby. The Moglin just meeped, before crying loudly, Sally picked up the crying Moglin, carrying it on her shoulder. It scampered around and cheeped, but Sally just looked glassly at it. "Well, if you'll excuse me," Quentin spoke up glumly, "I'll be going back to the... Inn. For some tasks that Yuglar set me," The tone was supposedly cheery, but it sounded very false and disheartening in the circumstances. Robina looked listless as she yawned briefly and stretched. *"Kriiiii! Cree! Chiiibeee!"* Diaglo carried the Moglin back to the shed behind the inn, he needed to think for awhile.

'Can't I rescue just one from this pitiless fate? If all you've really seen, was truly dreams within a dream?' Diaglo's eye's watered at this as he read the faded letter, he looked towards the Vessel which he had set aside for *Misako.* For her alone. For so long, for what seemed like forever. For eternity. Uncharacteristic anger welled up inside him, but it quickly died down as he noted... the familiar writing... was Olapen's slanted writing from around three years ago. She disappeared back then, quite sudden. It was a mystery unsolved, which shall never be solved. Tears dotted his eyes as he remembered the ache in his soul... When he realised that everyone he *knew* was gone. Everyone. Even the mechas from Soluna City, the Police station... All gone, vanished into history's past. For a moment, he hoped as he encounter Melkior again after Soluna. And then the Queen vanquished her for whatever firkin' reason it felt like.

Now that *nato* - that chance was taken away. A terrible cry tore his throat as he howled in sorrow, "Misako. Or Melkior! Please come baaaack," He gritted his teeth as the lone blacksmith sobbed, hot tears sorely racked his back, "... I've stuck by you for too long to know that... You won't-take-the-*Hihythir*-way out. You're too... Shimei, too vigilant to acknowledge..." He glanced towards the Vessel in pathos. Now was a good time as any. With a flick, he shook the Vessel open, upturning it in a hurry. Once the Vessel had slid open, he thumbed the compartment clumsily. He kept that Vessel which withstood the test of the Reset.

Diaglo had a feeling that his friend would've used it and Matos Tsuba handed it to him alone for safe-keeping. Now was time to test its capabilities. He felt the steel of the hilt, it felt smooth, although slick with his sweat. Humming faded sometimes, its blade glimmered softly in faint bursts of random static. It was a powerful weapon, now but a shadow. He glanced at it before laid it on the wooden floor. He couldn't bear to look at it. It was a reminder of all the terrible and wonderful experiences of Soluna, of the adventures they had.

"If I step on it, I shall erase... I can't," he muttered, "what am I doing, am I a emotionless *Khayeir?*" Better get it done with, get this over with. But something stopped him, if Valencia was scolding him for ruining such a priceless artifact. But he needed to move o... He slipped and fell on his tail, pain struck him and he cursed in Aublonian. He was prepared, but something... No! Instinctively, he paused in the middle of his action. The note he threw on the floor... more words were appearing!

The paper was inserted with new words. He immediately scrabbled for the paper: What if? Wace? Was it trying to tell him something?? He mouthed the words as the the note glowed softly. *'But when all our dreams were over, only then you realized... That soon the truth is often. In front of your very eyes, Daichi.'* Wace. *'All you have to do... Is await the call, before rapid sounds... of the unlocked door.'* Unanswered, but for the first time since a few minutes, Diaglo had hope. A slim hope, but hope nonetheless. He glanced at the note.
"Diaglo! Please open the door!" begged Quentin and Robina, desperately hammering it down, "Open the door for your sake. Open!"
What for? Everyone he knew had gone, even Devi - he couldn't see anything more pointless. It was time to await fate. Plonking himself down on a sturdy stool, he glanced at the clock: 2:27 pm. If nothing happened within the next ten minutes... He'll see.
Five minutes later, he was still waiting. Diaglo was usually patient if pleasant-minded but this-was-just-pushing-it. Sighing, he shambled to his feet. This was no joke. The poor alien knew he was acting just like Devi did before, but he didn't care.

Seven minutes passed, ticking onwards. Bored, bored, bored. Unknowingly to Diaglo, a rift opened in Swordhaven - and someone exited the portal, she glanced towards the place, and her eyes softened, "Diaglo." She clutched the amulet at her neck and her eyes glowed through her shade, "Teleportation!" Eleven minutes - This was firking! No more waiting! It ends now, the *feuilt* dream. He literally leaps to his feet, using his tail to prop himself. struggling to maintain balance. He almost crashed to the floor and tears sprung in his eyes. Suddenly, a hand caught him through the wall... Correction: through a HOLE in the wall, the wall blasted apart, with smoke steaming from the sheer impact. she was finally *there.*

Diaglo dropped to his forelegs, refusing to look at who prevented this. He buried his face in his arms. "So ashamed, yoltair." he stated quietly, "I'm seeing *Shigu* of this scene being a nightmare. Leave me alone in my misery." He blinked at the sunlight streaming through the dust. His slitted eyes adjusted then widened. "... You're here, *Jacint?"* He responded at the sight, Melkior looked over him with the shades she sported, *"Kamui?"* she also blinked with shock at his response, "You... don't recognise me?" Diaglo picked up the sword on the floor, before handing it to her.
"It is yours, is it not?" he stated softly, his eyes glistening. He finally looked at peace with everything. "I've kept it for you, in case..." Before he could finish, Melkior looked overjoyed, nuzzling him constantly. "Thankyouthankyou, Daichi!" she squealed happily, "You've remembered for me!"
"... Yah, I guess I did," Diaglo laughed, slightly embarrassed, "You can stop doing that now!" he smiled a bit. But his smile froze when he saw that she... was limping. So that's why she didn't bother to walk all that way to him, the Queen must have done something.
"I must be your Knight in shining armour, huh." Melkior seemed subdued, Diaglo just blinked once shyly, amused at her response. "Just joking, cause I always had to rescue you from -"

"Nope, you're more like a warrior... In *Daekaryn* armour..." the Alvenos replied, before she could finish her sentence. "I'm just happy." he complemented as he spun her around briefly, "Just contented to see you, *Karuyis*." He smiled at her face.
For the first time in eons, Diaglo felt... inexplicably *warm.* It was a remarkably safe feeling. And yet it shouldn't *be.* Mustn't be, couldn't be. The warmth spread through their body, and Diaglo nearly dropped her in utter shock. It... was intense. Almost scalding, but suddenly their temperatures seemed to adjust back to the correct degrees.
"It's as if I've had the old Misako back all along. You've always been the same Koko." he grinned.

"We're all alive..." Diaglo's hands trembled at the realisation of this implication, he looked at Melkior in amazement. "*Fairuit!* The time line's adjusted! You did this for us Solunians? Our friends, I'm so touched. WOOHOO! I'm soooo happy, *Jathrin*!" The snake-tailed Blacksmith announced to a stunned population of Swordhaven citizens. Quentin at first awed, leapt for joy at this as Diaglo ran back into the room and laughed with delight, scooping up the Oeyken in his arms and hugging her so tightly. Just then, Landon walked into the room, dusting his uniform and dragging his Starsword along. His mouth dropped open, he seemed to stutter, unable to speak as he doubted his vision. Melkior... and Diaglo, together?

"Gah... gah... DIAAAAAGLO!" The brother yelled in surprise, Diaglo seemed apologetic and unaware of impact it had on Landon. "*YAWA!* GET OUT NOW!" Diaglo stood back from Melkior and they both laughed awkwardly at Landon's fumed look. Things were almost back to 'normal', almost. "Sheesh, Kior," Landon muttered, ruffling his hair and smiling sheepishly, "Just like back in the SPD police force, with all the mecha. Sorry about that, overreaction." he muttered to both of them through his covered eyes. "Lesee, oh yeah, I remember that group you had back then, there was Devi and Vixen." Melkior looked confused and her eyes widened, "Aren't you forgetting someone?" she asked Landon, he looked bewirled.
"Nah, it looks like those the only people that bothered to do the mission with ya." He smiled, Diaglo nodded his head.
"I'm sure you didn't miss anyone you *Donjatir."* said Diaglo, cheekily noogling Landon's head as the other begged him to stop... Melkior thought things over... It surprised her they couldn't remember Rosia after all this time! Could it be... The change Vixen promised? As Chilebre scampered over to her, Melkior tugged on Diaglo's arm and he stopped.
"If you two would just listen to me, I've a duty to do." Melkior informed them, "If you need me, you'll know where to look." The two Alvenos grinned and courtesily allowed her to exit the room, but then they glared at each other. Rivalry?

The lonesome cemetery was barren today, not a thing moved except for the rustling trees and the bare yellowing skeletons that dug themselves up (possibly the dancing undead). As Melkior trod through the long discarded grass of yesteryears, she remembered how times had changed... And it looked like it was for the worse. Just then, she turned around at a slight noise. It was an 'elderly' man, with a full length snowy beard, crouched on a perched stone, his bamboo cane tapping on the solid concrete. It reminded her of Matos Tsuba and his wise lectures, but he gave her a stern glare. *Tap-tap-ratta-tap.* At each thud the stone seemed to yield to the repeated pressure, grinding a little at each noise.
"May I... help you?" Melkior inquired, but the male chuckled, "Wace, what are you doing here?" He laughed some more.
"Shimei." said the man, "It doesn't do that just for anyone, does it? Nay, not even Maza Rella and poor ol' Duncan!"

She shivered in the breeze as a tingle ran up her. "Nayu, not even for da Solunian University! Da poor ol' Warlic! Da Shadowscythe gets DEM ALL!!" There was something familiar about his creaky old voice, the way he sounded cheery and optimistic despite his 'age'. He looked overjoyed and happy to see a familiar face, "Wah, if it isn't ol' Koko-sama!"
"Dan't recognise mah?" The Alvenos chuckled, clasping her hands, "It's Rayne Davies!" She froze at this. No way... "Why dan't ya just sit by mah and talk bout old time's yah?" He grinned, showing the poor lady his blackened teeth. "I needz da company! Da compannnnies!" She responded by backing away and running through the trees, as the 'old' man grinned. He seemed to chuckle hauntingly after her. "HEHHEHEEH!" As she vanished over the hill, the man froze and retained his straight posture. Rayne removed 'fake beard' and false teeth, revealing his smooth older skin and pearly whites still intact.
"WOOT! I knew I could scare Koko!" he smiled belatedly, jumping up in joy at his prank. Just then he heard a sharp CRICK! "Getting old for firking jokes," Rayne muttered ironically, rubbing his back, "Scaring aliens aren't fun."

Stumbling, Melkior stumbled to the nearest gravestone sobbing at Rayne's prank. It wasn't that funny to her. But she dried her tears, Vixen wouldn't want her to cry. After all, she promised. She had to be strong and determined, just like back in those days. When she could defeat the Queen, then nothing else could top that! Dusting off the mildewy crumbling letters of the tombstone, she saw the words etched upon it: *Vixen Sangreal Foxtrot, a true and foxy companion.* At this tears threatened to sting her eyes again, making things blurry as she placed a flower next to it, magnolia... Vixen's favourite. Tears dripped and trickled down her face, spilling over... She promised, but that alone was hard to keep.

The ache in her scar made things worse. She moved to the next one: *Devlin Whirl, the commemorated Constable.* The next was worst, but she dreaded it: *Olapen Jinitro, the Lighting Mage who respected every minute of life.* It was hard to let go... of the placed the Jing staff on the smoothed out grave, and it seemed to glimmer softly as it sank down into the dirt, pulled by the Force... The next... The final stone. This would confirm whether Vixen truly fixed the timeline. Chilebre chirped curiously as Melkior gasped slightly at the sight of the gleaming surface of the final chiselled stone, the pale blue moonlight glinting off the marble... *Rosia's... Rosia's name should be... Should be there... But it wasn't?!* She sank down, feeling the full impact of this startling revelation. *Larosin's name...* Gone. As though nothing was there. It was surprising and unexpected that that of all things - It was firking terrible and she felt the guilt and burden weigh on her.

Wace - what should she do. How could she make up for <u>that?</u> But everything was finite, but Rosia... was still a person, she had a life and made things difficult for most of them. Regardless of consequences. Regardless of her fate, as an emotional tool of rage. Others had used Larosin for their own means... *But maybe - just maybe Larosin wanted that release from eternal fury ongoing through the centuries, maybe that was the cause of her Dakittu.* Melkior reasoned, as the truth hit her. *This rage was a debt that was wrought through ages, which only the Reset could fix.* It was time to pay back the debt.

With shaking hands, Melkior grasped her Malachi armour, it concealed something. Taking out her stone-heavy backpack, she flipped through the items stored in there until she came across the final item. It was temporary, but still solid. It felt warm against her hands, as a sealed tight porcelain jar exited, sliding out heavily with a *CLUNK*. "This item belongs to you Rosia, doesn't it?" The jar seemed to thud in her hands as she placed it onto the dirt. The jar throbbed on its own as she left it there. It was as though a huge burden had been lifted off her, it had been forever since she... felt that relaxed.

Dawn spilled across the sky, two hours later, as Melkior watched the sun rise, the rosy light rolled across the shadowy stones, creating a spectacular display of orange and red hues against the glistening surfaces. It was a sight she missed since Soluna fell, ever since Devi and Misako watched the sun rose, and how she sorely missed that sight. She smiled in complementation, it was truly a beautiful sight to behold, she felt the sun warm the chilled frosty air, basking in the light of the refreshing dawn. If only life itself was as beautiful, untouched and pure as nature. As she waited, she felt a hand squeeze. It was Diaglo and Robina, watching the sun rise with her. Melkior felt for the first time that she wasn't truly alone.
"Beautiful sight, ain't it, the rise of a new sun," mused Robin as she tickled Chilibre. The Moglin purred in delight. Melkior blushed at that comment. Glancing towards Rosia's stone, the jar... vanished. Diaglo seemed to be enjoying the event.

"I'm ready to move on now," Melkior smiled genuinely at Robina, "after all, I've got a whole life ahead of me."
"Koir, you're so sweet when you phrase things that way," Diaglo responded gently, "So what's next on our list? Any more missions from the Police, any more clues? Slueth Inn?" It was as if the old Misako was staring back at them, amused. She hugged them one at a time before they strolled off into the distance, laughing as old friends, dawn behind their backs. It took a while for Melkior to respond to Diaglo's final question, before they left.
"Not now, I've had enough. How about we all get some peppermint ice cream at the inn?" Melkior responded, before whispering a soft 'yatta'. A gentle yet laugh echoed as the trio exited, leaving their

troubling pasts behind them. As they left, you could hear the lonely wind whistle through the Cemetery, a distant shadow of its former glory...

"Open it, now." ordered a firm yet subtle voice of soft-spoken Gravelyn, as she commanded. A skeleton grinned at his mistress's coy attitude at this. Admist the dismal sight of spiracle architectures and gothic exterior, red banners waved once again in its former glory, gold highlights contrasting merrily as the wind fluttered. A slight breeze picked up, sending a haunting call down corridors of the castle.
"Aruueeww! (Yes, my ebil mistress)" agreed the Skeleton, chuckling menacingly. Gravelyn gave him/it a strange look, before patting it on the head. Emperess of the Shadowsycthe was curious about the capsule her minions had discovered whilst busily extracting more weapons from the underground castle. This was clearly an unusual sight, she decided innocuously as she walked within the ruins of the crumbling castle, admiring its ruminated decor at large. Since Selpuchure had left her a large inheritance, she had the right to spend it how she wished... But this could be a priceless treasure discovered! The delectable thought of golden AC coins and silver Credits raining down amongst her minions pleased her greatly. Just then, a dark thought entered her mind: *Open it, and you will find GLORY! HAHAHA.*

Your multifold wishes shall be desired! She dismissed the thought. The thought seethed before it said: *Remember? The Marquis's brother hidden something in these ruins, he requested for you to find it. YES, you alone! I know many shigu of things to come.* Interesting.
"Shall we investigate?" asked an insincere minion of Shadowfall, bowing lowly until his lips touched the floor. Gravelyn nodded, ignoring a stray lonely howl of the wind as it gust through the castle wall-holes.
"Thespians," she muttered, "acting without benefit." The apprentice look confused. She waved him away, as though disgusted at his fawning. "Go. To my throne chamber." she hissed gently.
"My ebil mistress... We have notified you of our absence. But while we were gone, we found... Nullified machine-operated chamber. Of indiscernible origin, my lordliness." The Empress's voice was hardened, it sent shivers down flexed spines- sweet shivers.
"Did you not hear me?! OPEN THE CHAMBER!" she yelled out at the thought, "I specifically request, hurry or doom upon all of-." The soldiers hurriedly dashed across the castle, wrenching the lock-safety feature out. They did it so quickly, the dimmed lights in the chamber gave out. "FOOLS! FIRKING idiots!" Gravelyn roared at the two. They winced as they adjusted the lights on.

The vision cleared. It was a little petite girl, merely no more than fifteen years of age. It was merely a guess, it was hard to tell amongst all the attached wires used to keep her alive within the frozen capsule. She looked almost innocent, newborn-like. Almost. There was something familiar about her look, something dignified and proud as her predecessor. Faint wisps of smoke surrounded her as she opened her luminous eyes of falseness. Light flaxen hair of gold streams around her like a running fountain as she shrunk back at the harsh lights. Upon her smallish body there were signs of atrophy, disuse of limbs enfolded across her spindly thin figure. Ribs showing through vapid thin flesh enshrouding the unnamed. It breathed shallowly, in a feeble attempt to live. There were signs of tampering, signs of innocence being restrained, for where her back was bared... sprouted scarlet stubs. Iron 'stubs', slick with oily sweat as her hands still clenched. *Imprefect copy, but she would have to do.* Gravelyn inspected the faint girl with incurious surprise. The minions looked uncertain at the Oeyken, embarrassed at such 'purity' displayed. The empress was 'shocked' in a squeamish way, but then again Selpuchure did tell her of an agent working amongst the Shadowscythe's kind. "Look at her, she wouldn't hurt... a fly?" scoffed a minion, before backing away from the lady.

"Wace, what is... She?" exclaimed the minion as Gravelyn stroked the lady's chin in endearment. The lady winced in utter pain as she glimpsed them both, the saviours who had rescued the replica from concealment, it would have been buried under rubble for eternity.
"A sign," replied Gravelyn, "A definite *shigu* of things to come. this created being's unleashed upon an innocent world, which needs more bloodshed... But she still has much to learn. Come, I'll take you under

my darken crimson wing, just as my father did for me. Rosia paid her services for the Queen." The Emperess reached out for her, but in frightened almost palatable instinct it cowered, its shimmering yellow hair covering its face. Almost instantly, the Emperess felt the wind breeze past. In its fright, it managed to crouch forwards as its bare back was revealed. The bounds holding it seemed to snap, frayed ropes twanged and whip-lashed across the chamber.

"Firking! OWUCH! Hold on, this 'whatever' loose!" One of the ropes hit one of the minions and he yells. It cries out in agony at the amount of pressure it exerted just to snap them. Clear blood smeared around the chaffed wrists dripped constantly. Almost in defence, Gravelyn found herself looking at the blades (no longer stubs of steel) extended as they curved out directly. Almost in shock, the replica withdrew its twin blades, curious at the reaction of its observers. *They just stood there. They didn't seem afraid. Were they her 'friends'?*
"Hm, impressive." observes the minion at Gravelyn, "Is it sapient? Can this abhorrent replica understand us? It's a mockery."

It was nowhere as spirited as its predecessor, nor as spiteful. But yet, through its experience it knew of fear... And it knew...

"No," Gravelyn defends the confused replica, pressing a firm hand against it, "This... replica certainly understands us, it's a quick learner," she chuckles, "I can tell from its behaviour. If it could talk, that'll be even *better."* the Shadowscythe empress continues, "the voice in my head told me so, she has a name. It's Garnet Admete," She wraps her arms around the replica and the minion's jaws dropped to the floor.
"Garnet?!" They exclaimed, "That's just so DAMNED and FIRKING BIZARRE!" they managed to bellow, echoing each other. "... Wace."

Yet the replica didn't resist, Garnet's instincts told it to run, but it didn't. It stayed put, safe in its new motherly Mistress's arms as shadowy Gravelyn coaxed it thoroughly... "Garna-shana." the Emperess muttered softly. Nickname of endearment reminded Garnet of its creator and how he used to treat. Not as an object, but as an 'individual' per see. An image came to its muddled thoughts, clear as day: Blurred behind the doorway, peeking at it - as an expression came onto the face and the sound of running... That was long ago. It took only moments, but it now knew of expression the someone displayed: Fear... Fulfilled hate of its creation. Knowledge of being...
"..." Garnet couldn't help sobbing in Gravelyn's arms as tears ran down its fair face, golden mop of hair trails down in vapid realisation.

Gravelyn held the replica. Unsure of how to react. It reminded her of how she regarded Selpuchure and his death. "Garnet, wace's wrong?" she told it sternly, "There's a way out of your predicament." Staring, Garnet's eyes met the Emperess in desperate wonder.
"You see... The Reset had already paved the way, just as your predecessor did. And now due to the element of Chaos restoring the Dakittu of the Shadowscythe's reign, we need to focus on glorious victory of our armies. We need back-up. We need more power," Gravelyn's eyes gleamed, "We need... Someone to lead, someone to direct our hatred towards those who are misguided. Would you accept? To do so, need to destroy main pillars so the second Chaos Lord doesn't appear due to Drakath's orders. Destroy the goodness of purity?"

Garnet didn't know what the Kelf the Emperess was going on about, but those magnificent words... Were big. It felt humbled at those words... As it started to speak, Garnet instinctively felt like it was part of the bigger picture. It was a part of a huge decision that would change the course of Shadowfall forever... And it only took one sentence. As she spoke, the replica was aware of its accent, timid and awkward due to years of misuse. A vision befell it and Garnet saw her opponent as in a dream, the cloaked figure with eyes of two hues.
"You dare challenge me?" spoke the cloaked figure, its scarred face surprised at Garnet's appearance.

Time seemed to stop for it.

"No, Empress of the Shadowscythe, I will not oblige." Garnet whispered, before the Replica closed its eyes against the dying light of its throes of her weeping breath which thinned against Gravelyn's shoulder and saw no more of its choice in the faint path of destiny...

A shadowy light shone and faded. A tortured soul was freed from its boundaries. The replica's decision became a faint whisper...

But the world moves on.

Chaptaire Fin.